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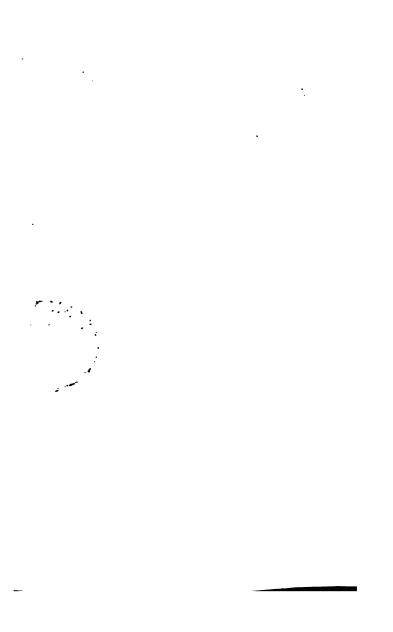
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### LEGENDS

OF

# THE SAINTS;

OR,

STORIES OF FAITH AND LOVE.





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# Saint Batrick.

The readers of Jocelin's quaint and fanciful "Life of St. Patrick," will have little difficulty in guessing the source of the following poem. I suppose it is hardly necessary to add, that the wonders therein narrated, in common with many others included in this collection, are not, by any means, presented to the public as articles of faith.

NEAR Emphtor, where the land slopes to the sea,
Calphurnius and Conchessa—holy pair!—
Dwelt in sweet peace and blessed charity:
A brave, just man was he; she, heavenly fair;
And from their union came the being bright
Of whom it is my purpose here to write.

Strange marvels marked his birth-hour; and when fell
The sacramental water o'er his head,
A triple beam, a wondrous miracle,
Bright promise of his future greatness, spread.
So he was named Patricius, as a sign
That many would through him find life divine.

But with his years more brightly shone his grace;

His heavenly perfume strengthened and diffused.

Once, when a flood rose round his native place,

While all around ran frightened and confused,

The boy went forth, and, with command benign,

Sent back the waters to their ancient line.

And once, when death, with sudden, ruthless stroke,
Laid prostrate one who had been dear to him,
His prayers the flame of life again awoke
In throbless pulse, and rigid, icy limb.
Yea, more: that prayer, so excellent and good,
Oft broke the bonds of Satan's servitude.

Yet, far beyond these deeds, his life was strange,
So sedulous through all his God to please;
Wise in a way that knew nor fault nor change,
And rich in all the Christian charities.
He kept, with steadfast and unfailing truth,
A sinless heart through all the wiles of youth.

But, as the Lord chastiseth His beloved,
Pruning superfluous shoots and buds of pride;
And as best gold is in the furnace proved,
So Patrick was by suffering purified.
Reft from his country, borne across the sea,
And sold to hopeless pagan slavery.

For years a swineherd, ruthlessly consigned

To weariness, and want, and solitude,

Yet did he, in his desolation, find

A comforter, so absolute and good,

He scarcely ceased to thank God for his lot,

Save when he grieved for those who knew Him not.

And oftentimes for such he'd plead and pray,
Thirsting for their salvation above all;
And when the Saviour, in a wondrous way,
Restored him to his country, free from thrall,
He instant vowed his future time and toil
To break the bread of life on Erin's soil.

Oh! rest was welcome to his wearied feet,
And home allured to quiet sanctity;
And mother's love was sweet—divinely sweet—
But his heart lay with those beyond the sea—
The generous race, who might, through him, possess
God's noblest gifts of faith and holiness.

In visions they had called to him to come

And share with them the heritage of peace;
The very children, from their mother's womb,
Implored him for deliverance and release:
From closing eve till morning, grey and dim,
The little tender voices haunted him.

So, ere his parents' tears of joy were done—
Before their cry of welcome died away—
The long-lost, newly-found, beloved son
Across his father's threshold passed for aye,
And to the dwelling of Germanus hies,
That he might mould him for his enterprise.

The wealth of sacred lore he gathered thence,

The patience to endure, the strength to dare,

The powers of suasive, forceful eloquence,

We'll leave his after labours to declare,

And tell what greeting met his holy band

When first they touched upon our emerald land.

Twas on the evening of that pagan feast,
When men, in darkness, darkness did adore,
That Patrick, girt by many a learned priest,
With torch and swaying censer sought the shore,
And led his white-robed train, in solemn state,
To where, wide open, stood the royal gate.

The king beheld, and marvelled at the glare;
Then, breaking into sudden, vengeful ire,
Bade his swift kerns to bring before him there
The daring kindler of forbidden fire:
For to his mind an old tradition came,
That one should thus the land's allegiance claim.

Nor failed the Magian troop to raise a flood
Of prophesying—execrating sound!
Yet, when Saint Patrick in their centre stood,
Such visible protection fenced him round,
That fear possessed e'en Leoghaire's bold heart,
And as he came he let the Saint depart.

But not the less he harboured thoughts of ill;
And from that time, by snare and ambuscade,
The chosen one of God he sought to kill,
Who ne'er for that his work of love delayed.
And, if the king could trouble, from his race
Came the first, sweetest conquest in the place.

For to this Leoghaire were daughters born,
Like roses in a rosebed, freshly bright:
The dark-locked Ethnè, ruddy as the morn;
Fair Fenella, as soft as summer night:
And both were trained and nurtured in such sort
As might befit their rank and father's court.

And once, when Patrick, in the sunny dawn,
Rested beside a fountain, clear and cool,
They passed across the daisy-sprinkled lawn,
Meaning to bathe them in the limpid pool;
But paused, in awestruck wonder and surprise,
When his grave, reverend aspect met their eyes.

They thought him first a spirit, and, with dread,

Asked whence he came, and what the name he bore.

But Patrick to their questions mildly said:

"What matters that? My time will soon be o'er.

Better ye knew the God whom I obey;

His name and power will never pass away."

Then, as the damsels stood, his words attending,
Right willingly did he to them rehearse,
How God—the unbeginning, never-ending—
E'en with a word made all the universe;
And of the Virgin and her blessed Son,
Who, by His cross, the world's redemption won.

He counselled them to faith, and to contemn

Earth's kingdoms for the realms serene and sure,
Where the Celestial Spouse would join with them
In union, indissoluble and pure.

And they, believing, owned the truths he prized,
And in the fountain he the twain baptized.

Then said the elder girl, with eager breath:

"When will He come, the King all kings above— The Victor over sorrow, sin, and death—

The Bringer of bright wisdom and true love? My heart grows faint at thought of His delay; O pray, my father, that He comes straightway!"

And Fenella, the silvery-voiced and fair,

Closed her white hands in gentle entreaty,

Soft murmuring: "O my father! would we were

From this dread world of woe and evil free!

Ah, me! the thought of that full, perfect peace,

Will haunt me till my spirit wins release!"

Then Patrick, moved beyond his wonted calm,
By such strong faith and vehement desire,
Bade them partake the sacramental Lamb,
That, kindled by its fervid, living fire,
And in its strength made strong, their souls might
spring

Up to the starry chamber of the King.

The maidens heard his words but to obey;
And full of love the Eucharist receiving,
Went joyfully upon their heavenward way,
Nor once looked back on all that they were leaving;
But slept the sleep, most beautiful and blest,
Of Him "who giveth His beloved rest."

And rose-bright Ethnè, and fair Fenella,

Were mourned for by their people; and in time,
Above their grave, the minster of Armagh

Upraised the symbol of our faith sublime;
Nor did the Saint, in his best harvest hours,
Lose the remembrance of these early flowers.

And scarcely had the virgins upward passed,
When all their tribe and kin, with one accord,
From off their souls the bonds of evil cast,
And turned, in faith and trust, to Christ the Lord:
Then Patrick, leaving them to others' care,
Went forth, fresh toils and perils new to dare.

And coming to Eblana's towers of strength,

He heard a lamentation and a cry

That shook the city through its breadth and length,

And rose in wild appealing to the sky:

The people's pride, their harshness, fierce and rude,

In tears of grief sank prostrate and subdued.

Ah! piteous was the spectacle that day!

The kingdom's hope, the monarch's stalwart son,

All stark in death within his chamber lay;

While on the stream, where she to bathe had gone,

His drowned sister floats, and, smiling, seems

Like one who, sleeping, dreameth pleasant dreams.

They lift the maiden from the tangled reeds,
And gently place her on her twin-mate's bier.
Meanwhile a rumour through the palace speeds,
That wonder-working Patrick draweth near.
But Alphinus bemoans his children dead;
Like Rachel, he will not be comforted.

Of better hope the nobles and the crowd,

Who round the Saint in supplication cling,

Pledging them to his faith, with promise loud,

Would he but save the darlings of their king;

While he, well-pleased, marks how the tumult rolls,

Foreseeing thence a mighty gain of souls.

Then, passing to the flower-embellished bed,
And bending o'er each clay-cold marble form,
A low-voiced, fervent, forceful prayer he said,
And all at once life wakened, fresh and warm,
Through flushing cheeks, and radiant, questioning eyes,
And from the couch both youth and maiden rise.

No need to tell the joy that followed then;
Suffice it, that, before the next sun gleamed,
The monarch, with his knights and warrior men,
Right well the peoples' plighted word redeemed:
And seldom did such fervent neophyte
As Alphinus the Prelate's heart delight.

For when to be baptized he meekly stood,

The Saint's staff, through his foot, pierced to the
ground;

But he, in his large love and gratitude,

Would not disturb the prayer by look or sound,
But silent bore, till one, by chance, espied

The sward with all the generous torrent dyed.

And Patrick healed him when the rite was done,
And blessed him, for that he, so newly taught,
So lately from the ways of error won,
The inmost spirit of the law had caught.
And long the man of God with him abode,
Training his people up the narrow road.

While there, he, by a holy custom led,
Retained a certain leper in his place,
To whom all needful things he ministered,
For love of Christ, and to obtain His grace;
Himself tending his wants, and, as seemed good,
Refreshing either man with fitting food.

Yet was the leper from earth's longings free;

He sought but to preserve his spirit's health:

And when he, wasted with his leprosy,

From out his guardian's home withdrew by stealth.

Both, lest he might offence or trouble bring,

And to prepare for his far journeying;

And patient, waiting death, he sat alone
Within the chamber of a hollow tree;
Nor did he, in his anguish, sigh or moan,
But prayer and praise sent up unceasingly.
And God was with him till life's final stir—
Then angel hands prepared his sepulchre.

And soon thereafter, as Saint Munus came
Close by the place, one still midsummer night,
He saw a radiance, like the day-star's flame,
Shed o'er the grave a pure, celestial light;
And heard angelic harpings, and a hymn
Of joy, that sounded till the dawn broke dim.

And Munus fain the leper's bones would raise
From out the desert, solitary place,
But Patrick said: "Not so; e'en in our days
That spot shall be enriched by deeds of grace."
And with his words did after facts agree,
For there Saint Brigid dwelt in sanctity.

No sooner was Eblana's conquest o'er,

Than sought the Saint Mononia's\* fertile plains:

That won, the strong, life-giving food he bore

Through Ulad† and Connactia's‡ wild domains;

Nor did his tender, careful charity,

Forget the wave-beat islands of the sea.

<sup>\*</sup> Munster.

<sup>†</sup> Ulster.

<sup>#</sup> Connaught.

Ah! surely 'twas no trifling thing to draw

A crowned and sceptred lie from its high place,
And plant Christ's austere, self-denying law,
Within unbounded licence's chosen space—
The world, the flesh, the baffled evil one,
Could not, unmoved, behold such action done.

But he, the Saint, so burned with zealous fires,
He would not heed a lion in his way;
And our hot-blooded, eager, Celtic sires
Had hearts as genial as the suns of May,
And eagle natures, whose supreme delight
Was in the sternest strain and loftiest flight.

So, when the truth, in all its solemn glow,

Challenged the homage of their generous souls,

Theirs was no stinted service, grudged and slow—

No measured love, dealt forth in scanty doles—

But all, as emulous of Christ's sacrifice,

Gave for His sake what each one most did prize.

The monarch left his crown and seat of pride;

The sage his harder won and haughtier throne;

The untaught hind forsook the mountain side,

To spend his strength upon some altar-stone;

And myriad maidens laid—oh! offering meet—

Their virgin hearts before the Saviour's feet.

The annals of that time are beautiful,

With tales of lofty faith and love benign—

A very garden, from whose blooms I'll cull

One little flower, to deck this book of mine—

A tender, slender thing, that, to my thought,

Some fragrance of the heavenly bowers has caught.

When Patrick, at the holy fount, received
The chief Cartanus and his youthful spouse,
He prophesied: "For that you have believed,
Prosperity and joy will bless your house:
And thou, young wife, before another year,
Shalt bear a child to God and angels dear."

So, in the promised time, and as he said,

A lovely little daughter crowned their bliss—

A child of benediction, that seemed led

By God's own hand, and marked as one of His:

Sweet Treha up the narrow pathway went,

As though she knew not Adam's sinful bent,

And, for the love she bore her heavenly King,
In solemn hate of sin, and humble fear,
She, in her womanhood's delightful spring,
Forsook her stately home and kindred dear,
And to the Saint a weary journey trod,
That he might consecrate her to her God.

But, as she neared the place, a marsh delayed

Her further way, and, faint and travel-worn,

With longing heart and wistful look, the maid

Could only gaze towards the wished-for bourne:

Till Patrick, by the Holy Spirit taught,

Came forth to yield the blessed boon she sought.

And in his hands she made her virgin vow,

While God's good angels, from the summer's skies,

Let fall a snow-white veil upon her brow,

That hid her blooming cheek and pure sweet eyes,

And hung above the rounded, rosy lips,

And cast the dimpled mouth in strange eclipse.

Then Patrick, stretching forth his hand, had ta'en
The fold from off her eyes; but, speaking low,
She said: "My father, let it thus remain,
E'en as 'twas placed; I'd have it ever so;
That, earth shut out, my love might all be stored
For Him, my sovereign King, my chosen Lord!"

Whereon the Saint, rejoicing at her thought,

Let fall the veil, nor strove to move it thence—
And Treha walked the earth, and knew it not;

But, in her radiant, lovely innocence,

Passed, in the end, to her dear Lord's embrace,

Nor even in death did man behold her face.

And now, that cloud dispersed, whose hateful screen Had shut the land from God's true warmth and light,

The beauty of her Teacher's life was seen;
His lamp shone clear before his children's sight.
Truly and well each word and action brought
A blest example of the things he taught.

Three hundred times, by night, his knee was bent
In prayer and adoration; and by day,
Three hundred psalms his fervent spirit sent,
Yet did neglect no needful charity:
He healed, consoled—and, like to Blessed Paul,
Through joy, or pain, or shame, was all to all.

He made Armagh his see, and choice abode;
Yet still, by times, he'd roam the island wide,
And pausing, here and there, upon his road,
Would lead the people up some lone hill-side,
And there, by prayer and precept, praise and blame,
Wake to its old white heat the holy flame.

At one such meeting, he his soul outpoured So earnestly and sweetly, that the crowd, Enamoured of the honey of his word,

Forgot the lapse of time; and when the shroud Of night fell round them, still they listened on, Nor throng, nor preacher, wearied till the dawn.

And, at another, Brigid drooped her head,
And, worn with many watchings, sank in deep,
Still slumber; but the blessed Patrick said,
"Disturb her not; for it is writ: 'I sleep,
But my heart waketh:' and in dreams like these
The Spirit oft reveals His mysteries."

Yet, when the virgin woke, he bade be told

The vision that her slumbering eyes had seen;

And answered she: "Before me was unrolled

A sunny landscape, rich with meadows green,

And golden cornfields, and a thousand rills

Sparkled adown its circling, purple hills.

- "And herds of lowing kine, and beeves were there,
  And pasturing lambkins; and, by times, the wild,
  Sweet trill of song-birds stirred the perfumed air;
  And all who walked that land had features mild,
  And snowy raiment; and their accents still
  Spake peace, and benediction, and good-will.
- "But soon a cloud obscured the vision bright;
  White robes grew dim; fair faces, stern and haught.
  Next came a foreign foe; and then the night
  Swooped down with treble darkness o'er the spot.
  Yet, though I nought might see, I well was 'ware
  Of scorn, and hate, and passionate, wild despair.
- "At length, slow-paced and sad, a changeful dawn
  Lifted the horrid blackness, and the ray
  Momently gathered; till again the lawn
  Glowed in the brightness of a perfect day;
  And a calm race, with robes tear-bleached and pure,
  Joyed in a peace that should for aye endure."

And Patrick thus the dream interpreted:

He said, therein was shadowed Erin's fate;

Then, free and strong, but doomed to suffering dread,

Though, in the end, by faith regenerate—

By patience crowned with lasting sanctities—

She'd shine the glory of the Western seas.

And other prophecies he spoke—fulfilled

By time, alas! too well. And with such art

He wound the heavenly lessons he instilled,

Through the strong fibres of the nation's heart,

As soon may hell 'gainst God's high power prevail,

As Erin's faith fall off, or waste, or fail.

At length, his work well done, and feeble grown,

He turned him to Armagh to take his rest:

"Yet," said his angel, "not amid thine own,

But here, where first were told the tidings blest—

Here, shall thy bones repose;" whereon the Saint,

Though loth to stay, remained without complaint.

And Brigid, yet far distant, spun and wrought

A precious shroud, in which his frame might lie;
And Patrick, heaven-instructed, knew her thought,
And sent command to bring it speedily.

Then, blessing all around, he passed from this,
To the bright consummation of his bliss.

## The Circus' Bast Victim.

- THE day's silent labour was over, the brief recreation time come,
- And the brothers surrounded Hortensius, entreating some tidings of Rome;
- But little the novices' story rejoices them, when it is told—
- Christians are thronging the circus, e'en more than the pagans of old.
- A fever of carnage has seized them, a terrible hunger for blood,
- And there, where a legion of martyrs, in meekness and patience, have stood,
- Daily the trained gladiator does battle for being and breath,

- Or, at the command of his manifold murderers, yields him to death;
- And the Church, in her pity and tenderness, seeing these misguided ones
- Deaf to rebuke and entreaty, implores all her consecrate sons
- To pray to their Father in heaven, that in this red sea be not lost
- The Faith that His servants have won, with such infinite labour and cost.
- Then the brothers, receiving the message, engage to obey its behest,
- And, bending grave brows to each other, retire to their well-earned rest—
- Save one, in whose deep heart is sounding a call, by the others unheard,
- And he did not tarry to marvel, or question, the truth of the word;
- But, as the last footfall departed, uplifting his face, all aglow

- With the light of a beautiful purpose, made answer: "My Master, I go."
- And passed by the grotto and chapel, and prickly acacia wood,
- That, clinging, seemed earnest to hold him, out into the wide solitude.
- Grand are the nights in the desert, surpassingly glorious and bright;
- But never before had Almachius known aught like the charm of that night:
- The infinite calm, the deep silence, the vast level region that lay
- Spreading in silvery whiteness, and measureless distance away;
- Unbroken, save where some tall temple in ruins looked mournfully down,
- Or a tapering palm-tree uplifted its wide-spreading, feathery crown;

- And raising his eyes to the height that the pallid night planet had won,
- He saw her, slow-moving, and radiant, and large—an etherealized sun.
- And behind, the great sweep of the concave, all throbbing and pulsing with tender
- Faint flashes, that wound the far stars in a wonderful network of splendour,
- Sparkled Canopus, the beautiful; fiercely burned Sirius' lustre;
- While lesser orbs moved in soft mazes, or gathered in luminous cluster.
- And he thought of the Heaven he was nearing, whose glow would outshine even this,
- And he longed for its fullness of being, its lovely completeness of bliss.
- So, musing and praying, he felt not the toil nor the night hours creep by,
- Till again the cloud portals unfolded, and morning flamed red in the sky.

- Not like the dawn of our climate, that steals o'er the hills with a flush,
- Tremulous, tender, and tearful, and soft as a young bride's first blush;
- This hurried out of the East, all at once, with a flash and a blaze,
- Striking straight up at the zenith its arrowy, vertical rays.
- And the monk, though his soul was untiring, grew faint in the pitiless glare;
- But a soft breeze rose up to refresh him, a cool odoriferous air;
- And, passing a mountain-like ruin, he found in its Eden of shade,
- Date-trees, and fruit-bearing branches, and fountains that bubbled and played:
- So, refreshed and restored, he abode there, till day had abated its pride.
- Such was the first of his journey; the rest, too, had God for its guide;

- And the travel-worn, sun-embrowned wanderer entered Rome's gates with the day,
- Whose noon was to see the fell pastime in wickedest, wildest array.
- Dawn as it was, a great crowd by the Flavian walls struggled and moved,
- And the light word went round, or the wager was set on the champion approved;
- And the youth drew his rough garment closer, lest some, who had known him before,
- Might see, in the pale, meek-eyed brother, the stately young noble of yore.
- But when, as the morn was advancing, new thousands flocked eagerly,
- Almachius, who'd well-nigh forgotten that men could so flagrantly sin,
- Drew back, as some wild, wicked jest swayed the crowd with its horrible power,

- And paced the lone ways of the city, in patience awaiting his hour.
- At first, so absorbed in his purpose, he heeded not alley or street,
- But a flower-planted, statue-decked archway, rose up 'fore his wandering feet.
- Oh! then, what a throb stirred his bosom! just six paces on, and he knew
- The home that held all that he loved on the earth would be full in his view.
- Oft, when asleep in the desert, he'd seen its tall columns uprise—
- Often beheld their dear faces, and wakened with tears in his eyes.
- Although far he had gone, the sad tale of his kindred had reached to his ear—
- The fair younger brother's stern fortune, the twin-mate's brief, stormy career;

- And the fate of the conquering eldest, who, 'mid his high triumph and glee,
- Had caught his young bride to his heart, and gone down in the tempest-toss'd sea.
- Poor mother! sweet, fine, loving spirit, so cruelly tortured and cross'd:
- Ah! the world might rejoice; but she, surely, was weeping the jewels she'd lost.
- What, if he'd go to her now, and kiss back the salt drops as they fall?
- Well he knew, while she treasured the others, her heart clave to him over all;
- And 'twould comfort her so, though he lay but one moment against that fond breast,
- To know that the hot, eager spirit, at length found contentment and rest.
- And, under the sculptured entablature, panting and breathless he stood—
- The Welcome, that spake from the threshold, had sent a warm thrill through his blood.

- When the sun-dial pointed to noon, and the monk turned away, with a groan—
- For nature rose strong in his heart, and, one moment, was claiming her own;
- By the next, and her forces were scattered, the brief, bitter contest was o'er—
- The spirit, accustomed to conquer, had won one bright victory more;
- And Almachius, though bloodless his forehead, and tears in his eyes gathered dim,
- Said, out of the depths of his soul, it was better for her and for him,
- That both should be spared the dread struggle might follow such dangerous greeting,
- And a feeling, like triumph, possessed him, at thought of their final blest meeting.
- So, new strung and glad, and upborne, as by wings of an angel of light,
- He passed through the wondering people, straight to the field of his fight.

- There, all was ready! A hush of expectancy filled the vast place;
- And huge of limb, fearful of aspect, the combatants stood face to face.
- But when, from the deep pause of silence, outsounded the loud signal peal,
- And they, furious, rushed on to the encounter, the youth sprang before the raised steel,
- And high o'er the echoing clarion, his silver-clear voice bade them cease.
- In the name of the Father in heaven—the Master of Mercy and Peace.
- Then the startled barbarians drew back, while so wildly the tumult uprose;
- But patient, and fearless, and gentle, he stood 'mid that legion of foes—
- Nor bent his calm gaze, till the Prætor called out, in great fury and wrath,
- To strike down the daring disturber—to hew him away from their path.

- Then he looked suddenly up, and a flush o'er the still features came,
- While, at once, from the podium,\* a hundred quick tongues call Almachius' name;
- But loudest of all rose Alypius' wild shriek to unsay
- But the word had gone forth, the last child of his lineage lay dead on the sand!
- The sharpest, worst judgment had fallen, the ultimate warning was spoke,
- And the stricken sire, humbled and weeping, confessed and accepted the stroke.
- Then the whole story was told—how the noble young Christian had striven
- For years, with such fervour and patience, to win his fierce household to heaven;

<sup>\*</sup> The inner row of seats, reserved for the nobility.

- And how, when all failed, he had gone to the far burning wastes to atone,
- By penance and prayer, for transgressions, to his pure experience unknown;
- And, to-day, fit and meet for the sacrifice, free, at God's bidding, had come,
- To wash, with his innocent lifestream, the last pagan taint from old Rome.
- And the people, unstable as water, all grief-stricken, shame-stricken, now
- Crowd round him, laid low in his beauty, and, by his sweet martyrdom, vow
- That never again will they gather, at sound of the murderous blast—
- That was "The Circus' Last Victim"—the truest, the noblest, the last!

## The Chase.

THE noble prince his courser reined

Beneath a wide-spread tree;

Nor gallant knight nor squire remained Of all his companiè.

To bar his further progress, stood A million oaks combined;

Their sinuous, branchy underwood

All twined and intertwined.

Short way might man or courser gain That woven bower within,

When subtle sunbeams strove in vain

Its shadowy heart to win.

Nor long the prince the task essayed;
With careful steps he wound
To where a little open glade
Gave sight above, around.

O'erhead, the sky was deeply blue,

The west in crimson shone;

Kinglike the royal sun withdrew,

With all his bravery on.

If, through the shade, a stray beam played,

The earth with gold was sprent;

Sere leaves became like living flame,

Where'er his glances leant.

But, far and wide, on every side,

The forest reared its head—

As trackless as the ocean tide

The verdant wastes outspread:

And sign of life or stir was none,

Through all the leafy wood—

The trees might each be chiselled stone, So motionless they stood.

And such a solemn, brooding calm Held there its holy reign,

As when the Benediction Psalm Ceases its silvery strain;

And silence, that is healing balm, Fills all the sacred fane.

Stern was the Prince, and long unused

To gentle mood or thought;

But a sudden smart stirred his wayward heart,

As his sense that stillness caught.

It called up a long-forgotten day,

Ere he knew to hate or grieve;

And he sighed o'er the wastes of sin that lay

'Twixt his youth and that shining eve.

It minded him of a forest dim,

And a maiden of stately mien,

With locks of gold round her temples rolled, Like the circlet of a queen;

And his haughty head was bent with shame, And his brow flushed darkly bright,

As the thought was borne that his hand had torn Her down from her starry height.

Brave as he was, he could almost fear
This silent, reproachful air;

Not for his chance of the crown of France Would he wake an echo there:

And, noiselessly, he had risen to go, When, again, before him shone

The nimble form of the milk-white roe
That, since morning, had lured him on.

As if to new pursuit to woo,

Across his path it sped,

And he hung his rein on a neighbouring bough, And followed where it led.

- Straight on before, where the round, red sun Hung low in the amber west,
- To the tangled screen, that had whilom been Its haven and place of rest;
- And skirted its edge, till, with sudden delve, It sank to a verdurous copse—
- And the soft air swayed to a lulling sound Of falling water drops.
- There, for a moment, the creature stood,

  And its antlered forehead tossed;
- Then bounded into the leafy wood,

  And again to his sight was lost.
- But, this time, he'd seen the quivering boughs Close over its vanishing track,
- And, with sturdy strength, from either side He swept the branches back;
- And passed into a dusk arcade, Mossy, and leaf bestrewn,

- And cool with the fret of a rivulet,

  That sang an unceasing tune—
- A tawny stream, and dull at first, Where the deeper shadows lay,
- But, beyond the hindmost arch, it burst Into gleeful life and play;
- And over a brown, opposing trunk,
  In a shower of diamonds fell.
- Then, calmer grown, and crystal clear, Rippled down to its silent well.
- But, ere it turned, just where the sound Of the cascade ceased to ring,
- A narrow, trodden path he found,

  To the right of the limpid spring,
- And kept its winding, steep descent, Till he reached a rocky glen—
- A solitude, so wild and rude,

He had not seen till then.

But marvelled much the royal prince,

When, instead of some wild boar's lair,

He found many a trace of man's dwelling-place
In that desert lone and bare.

The roofless, ruined, dismantled hut

Of one lonely anchorite,

Stood under the edge of the shingly ledge,

A stone's-throw from his right:

While to the left, where the granite rocks In wild confusion lay,

As if its pile of ponderous blocks

Was the growth of some giant's play,

A ruder cell, and of later build, Seemed to claim a tenant yet,

By its bed of moss, and the carven cross O'er the open doorway set.

While, closer still, beside him stood

A cosy, sequestered nest,

Where, under another protecting rood, Was a holier place of rest.

- He had counted the graves, and a little below Marked a new-turned, open square,
- When a requiem chant, so solemn and slow, Stole up on the quiet air;
- And, all in a moment, the startled prince Remembered his favourite page,
- In the heart of the forest, a few days since, Found a secret hermitage:
- Whose few poor inmates, while they dwelt Removed from converse vain.
- Duly, by morning and evening, knelt

  In prayer 'neath the one blest fane.
- And, doubtless, theirs was this mournful hymn—
  And he followed down the pass;
- While the level sunbeams, waning dim, Threw long shadows on the grass.
- He thought, as he went, if these lonely men Knew aught of the thousand things

- That trouble such passionate hearts as his, And break the repose of kings.
- He wished, while the languid crescent moon Uplifted her pallid horn,
- That within their space was some little place

  That would shelter his head till morn.
- Not that his hardy nature cared For the comforts of bed or board:
- Many a midnight storm he'd dared

  With no shield save his own good sword.
- And he served the world with a haughty zest, That held holy things aloof;
- Yet, this night, he, somehow, longed to rest 'Neath a consecrated roof.
- And his heart leaped strangely when he neared The ivy-mantled dome:
- He crossed the porch of the rustic church, Like a wanderer coming home.

- All was silent there: the chant had ceased,

  And the ministering brothers gone;
- But his sounding tread brought an aged priest From the bier by the altar-stone.
- And how the softened prince was moved, When towards him quickly press'd
- The truest friend, the tenderest friend,
  That ever his life had blest!
- Though years before, in the flush and fire Of his hot, rebellious youth,
- They had parted, the one in anger dire,

  The other in sorrow and ruth.
- But the young man's brow was the saddest now, His voice had the mournfullest tone.
- When, the fond clasp made, and the first greeting said, They spoke of the days that were gone.
- "You were right," he said, "dear, trusty guide— Too true your words have been;
  - I have tasted the growth of strife and pride—
    The bitter fruits of sin.

And, to-day, I would live in lingering pain,

To undo what these hands have wrought—
I would give the last drop from my vein,

Might my soul's lost peace be bought.
But penance or vow were a mockery now;

How can I hope or pray?

Or could I dare Heaven's joys to share,

And she a castaway!"

The priest's arm closed on the grieving knight,
As in olden times it fell
Round the frank-eyed boy, that would seek his side,
His childish freaks to tell.
And, "Think not such thoughts," he said, "my prince,
But do your part, nor fear
That God will fail to help you, since
His mercy has led you here.
And for the rest, listen to me:

'Tis now a lustre's space

- Since, on an eve, like that we see,
  - A woman sought this place—
- A lowly woman, scorned of men,
  - And wrung with sharp despair—
- A fallen star, like Magdalen,
  - As sinful and as fair.
- Some fancied slight from one too well loved,
  - Had wakened her to her woe-
- Nay, noble prince, be not so moved, In truth, 'twas better so;
- Since, but for that, she, perchance, all years
  Would the inward voice contemn:
- While, out of the sea of her penitent tears, She gathered a priceless gem.
- For the narrow cell, in you rugged glen, Where alone she'd consent to live.
- Was brightened soon by that blessed peace, The world may not hope to give.
- And when her final course was run— For in the end she died—

Death came to her e'en as to one Already glorified.

But she prayed for you with such earnest power, Ere she passed to her heavenly home,

That I had no fear since that solemn hour:

I knew your time was come.

And I've waited your presence this livelong day:"

Then, turning to the bier,

And, lifting the scanty pall away,
"My prince," he said, "look here!"

One shuddering sigh told the knight's remorse,

As he listened to the tale;

But, when he stooped to the slender corse,

His cheek was ashen pale;

And trembling was the touch he sent The veil's light fold to move;

And woeful was the look he bent

On the face of his long-lost love!

- Oh! queenlike now no longer shone

  The wreaths of her golden hair;
- The blooming features were chill, and wan, And hollow, with wasting care;
- Yet, blent in every lineament
  Was a purer, holier charm,
- Than when, a little, sinless child, She slept on her mother's arm.
- For the glory won in her hard, good fight, Was upon her as she lay—
- A reflex bright of the cloudless light

  That would circle her ever and aye.
- And so truly and well did its mystic spell Impress the soul of the living,
- That the very first word the prince outspoke,
  Was a prayer of deep thanksgiving.
- And reverently, 'gainst the ivory feet, His throbbing lips he press'd;
- And he drew the cross from her folded hands, And set it in his breast;

And, instead of the faded pall, her shroud Was his mantle, rich and warm:

And all that night he kept vigil lone

Above her recumbent form.

And with many a tear, when his watch was o'er, He made shrift of his guilt and sin:

Then rode away, but nevermore

To be as he had been-

For the gentlest monarch of all his blood, The noblest king of his race,

Was the young man who pass'd through that silent wood,

On his Heaven-directed chase!

## Saint Zita.

- OF dear Saint Zita's parents, and the country of her birth,
- The memory and record has passed away from earth;
- But tradition has well guarded her own touching history—
- The perfect life, the perfect death, the crowning jubilee.
- It tells us that she prayed and served in her Genoese home,
- When the fate that tracks the hard and proud was hastening on old Rome;
- And how, a lowly slave-girl, moving at another's will,
- She laboured in her calling, with the truest zeal and skill.

- It says, too, that she had, of all the crowds that thronged that place,
- The sweetest smile, the kindest eyes, the brightest, dearest face;
- And, by times, the strangest beauty—Grecians learned in curve and shade,
- Often marvelled at the charm that round the little slave-girl played:
- Whence it came they could not gather, though, my reader, we may guess—
- It was but the outward shining of her inward loveliness.
- For Zita's soul was pure and white, it knew no taint of sin;
- And, knock at her heart's door who might, One only entered in.
- But He, her soul's beloved Lord, she daily, hourly sought,
- In joy and pain, through loss and gain, by every act and thought.

- For His dear sake, His works were dear; and earnestly she strove,
- Within her mean and narrow sphere, to act His law of love—
- Seeking out the sick and sinful, in their homes of want and shame;
- Teaching little pagan lips to speak His holy, saving name;
- Bracing up her timid fellows for the per'lous path they trod;
- Praying for the proud and cold, who, in their blindness, knew no God.
- Yet, 'mid these grave and high pursuits, sweet Zita ne'er forgot
- The humbler duties that pertained to her appointed lot:
- She was cheerful, she was patient, she would work from dawn till eve—
- Labour never seemed to tire her, harshness had no power to grieve;

- And her master said that Zita was the best slave in his hall,
- For, what time soe'er he sought her, she was ready at his call.
- So, sometimes, when his mood was good, he'd send her dainty fare,
- On which the poor made merry, for her food was plain and spare—
- And he showed her many favours: when her daily task was done,
- She was free until the rising of another morning's sun-
- Free to spend long hours in prayer to Him through Whom all being stirs—
- God help us! if our leisure hours must bear the test of hers!
- God help us! who, with every aid to speed our heavenward way,
- Pass loitering on, and oft, alas! go utterly astray!
- How will we meet the fragile girl, who made her footing good

- Through all the ills that line the thorny path of servitude?
- The brave, strong heart, that, 'gainst such odds, won her bright meed of glory,—
- But, reader, 'tis not mine to preach, I'd better tell my story.
- One day she was commanded to prepare a stately feast—
- A princely stranger, dear to Rome, would be the honoured guest;
- And her master, while he deigned to spend some words of praise upon her,
- Gave warning sharp, the coming feast should do him no dishonour.
- So Zita went, without delay, to deck the upper room-
- Hung wall and couch in broidered cloth, the pride of Asia's loom;
- Brought out the thick rich wine, and flavoured it to finest zest.

- Twined fragrant, cooling chaplets, to refresh each stated guest:
- And then, beneath her kitchen's roof, with fingers skilled and true,
- Meats brown and white, fruits ripe and bright, set forth in order due:
- Had all prepared while cooking time was yet an hour away—
- Then sought a place, where, for that space, she might retire to pray,
- And ask God's help and blessing for the labours of the day.
- And for a while that theme supplied the matter of her prayer;
- But soon all earthly thoughts were lost in rapture pure and rare.
- A band of white-robed angel forms, bent o'er her from above,

- Their bright regards turned to her face, in sweet, celestial love.
- She saw the proven saints, she saw the burning seraphim;
- Yea, Him, compared to whom, e'en these grand stars wane pale and dim:
- The inmost, highest Beauty, for a moment met her sight—
- Tongue may not tell, nor mind conceive, its splendour and delight;
- But through some new sense in Zita, that lay not in eye or ear,
- What surpasseth understanding was made manifest and clear.
- The vision only seemed to hold while one brief moment fled—
- Then, Zita, all her heart on fire, back to her labour sped;

- But, O her grief! when, by the shade the great sundial cast,
- She found that, in her trance of bliss, hour after hour had past—
- That not a second's time remained the supper to prepare,
- That even now the guests were crowding up by hall and stair:
- So, wild with fright, she hurried in, and, strange! in sleep profound,
- The slaves, clad in their waiting robes, lay stretched upon the ground:
- And stranger still, the odours, streaming up from bench and board,
- Where roast and ragout, duly cooked, their luscious incense poured.
- Every dish she had projected, stood in choice luxuriance there.
- And viands, till that hour unknown, enriched the dainty fare;

- The very fruit wore mellower bloom than in the morning hours—
- A strange, new, vivid beauty glowed through all the wreathed flowers.
- And while she gazed in dumb amaze, the slaves woke up, and each
- Bore off his wonted burden, without making sound or speech.
- Then, Zita, left alone, bewept her fault in having gone,
- E'en with such purpose, from the place before her work was done.
- Twas well, she thought, another had been found to take her post,
- And save from shame the noble name of their imperious host.
- But how was she to meet him? how endure her certain doom?—
- Just here a slave approached, and called her to the upper room.

- Ah! these Romans—they could conquer—they could nobly do and dare;
- If a kingly foe was prostrate, they might, sometimes, even spare:
- But, at home, they made stern masters—well she knew nor ruth nor grace
- Might be looked for from their hands, by one who held her lowly place;
- And though a saint, her human heart stood still in awful fear—
- Her human blood ran cold, as to her master she drew near.
- So, fancy then her wonder, when, with pleased and merry looks,
- He called out: "Good little Zita, you're the very queen of cooks!
- Till this hour I've never tasted meat with flavour so divine;
- On the feast that you have set us the high gods might deign to dine."

- And, when he ceased to speak, the noble guests, with one accord,
- Took up the theme, and Zita's praise re-echoed round the board.
- First she thought it cruel jesting—playing with their victim's pain;
- Then, all at once, the truth went thrilling through her heart and brain—
- He had saved her—He had helped her—He, the Holy One, had sent
- Angel hands to labour for her, while, in prayer, to Him she bent:
- And she hasted from the gleeful throng, and glittering room, to sing
- Glad hymns of thanks and homage to her loved and loving King.
- From that day forth, her life was such as angels live in Heaven—

- With every breath some grace was sent, some sweet, new favour given:
- Till, glad as bridal festival, each day of Zita's passed-
- But the dearest gift, the richest wine, God kept it for the last.
- He took, at length, the offering of her pure and sinless youth:
- She died a loving witness of her dear Redeemer's truth.
- When next the wicked sword was loosed against His faithful flock,
- The little, humble slave-girl met the first advancing shock:
- But, through the conflict, He stood by, His favourite to guard—
- Her martyrdom was not too stern, not too severe or hard:
- Some hours of weary pain—some scorn—a keen, sharp, parting pang,
- And Zita, with the choir of Heaven, her song of triumph sang:

- And Zita, crowned with light, and bearing her undying palm,
- Was one amid the white-robed train that never leave the Lamb;
- But shout, with glad hosannahs, through the wide, celestial sky—
- Glory to God, all praise to Him, the Holy, the Most High!

# The Preacher of Cologne.

THOUSANDS stood around a preaching friar,
In the great Cathedral of Cologne,
While he told, as if with tongue of fire,
How our right to heaven was lost and won.

Now, his tones were solemn as the thunder,
When its awful music thrills the spheres;
Then, as tender as the dews, that under
Forest trees gem blade and spray with tears.

So that, when he ceased, the people, spell-bound,

Looked with awe into each other's face;

And a murmur, like a muffled bell sound,

Throbbed and trembled through the holy place.

When, from his high seat, the priest descended, Gentle was his step, his bearing meek; But his downcast eyes with light were splendid, And the flush of conquest lit his cheek.

Till a man, in passing, said, "O Preacher!

While you held us there with pausing breath,
Thought you but of Christ, the humble Teacher,
Born for us in distant Nazareth?"

At this speech, the brother's colour wasted,
Word nor sign of answer made he none;
But away, with sudden speed, he hasted,
To his cell that lay without Cologne.

Shut out earthly praise, and earthly power:

There, with ceaseless sighs, bemoaned his sin—
There, with prayer renewed from hour to hour,

Strove with God a pure, free mind to win.

Fought so well his battle high and holy,

That, before three winters did depart,

Self was dead in him, and Jesus solely

Ruled and reigned in his devoted heart.

Then an inward, urgent voice impelled him

Forth, to plead and preach the Word once more;

And the multitude, when they beheld him,

Gathered round him as in days of yore.

But, when he would speak, soft tears of pity,
Sobs, and quivering sighs alone would come—
Yearning ruth for all the wicked city;
Yearning love for Jesus held him dumb.

And the people never thought or wondered
Why he met them thus, so still and faint;
But the sternest bonds of sin were sundered,
In the silent presence of the saint.

# Saint Christopher.

- FROM out the farthest East, there came a giant, strong and tall,
- Saying he should have for master one who lorded over all:
- And he searched through every land, but king and kaiser, knight and noble,
- Owned some check to will and pleasure—bent before some fear or trouble.
- Till, one day, a hermit told him of the dear Lord Christ, who came
- From His high and stately dwelling, to relieve our want and shame:

- Told him all the beauteous story, from the hour He first began,
- In woe and pain, to strive regain the lost birthright of man.
- And the giant's heart was melted, before the tale was o'er:
- He cried out, "I will seek that King, and serve Him evermore."
- But the hermit said, "Christ liveth now in Heaven, far away;
- To serve Him here on earth, 'tis needful you should fast and pray."
- "Woe is me!" exclaimed the giant; "words I ne'er could shape or plan—
- Pray I may not; I am all untaught, a rude, unlettered man;
- And, without due meat and drink, my strength right soon would waste and break;
- But I burn to do some labour for the blessed Jesus' sake.

- They were standing by a torrent, whose wild tumult filled the air,
- And the hermit, looking to him, bade him take his station there,
- And help across its waters deep the sinful and the good;
- Guard each weary, wayworn wanderer o'er the fierce insatiate flood.
- The giant never once demurred, but silently obeyed:
- For his staff, a palm-tree served him—the rocks lent him needful shade;
- And through all the changeful seasons of many a tedious year,
- Did he toil to serve the children of the Lord he held so dear.
- Till, one night, from out the darkness, came a young child's piteous cry:
- "Christopher," it said, "come, bear me hence; in peril drear I lie."

- The kindly giant hasted o'er, to succour and deliver—
- Caught the weeping baby to him, then again plunged in the river.
- And at once a mighty tempest smote him with its fierce uproar,
- And the waves, in sudden fury, beat him backward from the shore:
- Yea, the infant on his shoulder grew in size and weight, till he
- Bent as though beneath the wide world, and the universal sea.
- But his heart was brave, his limbs were strong, he strove with wind and tide,
- And won, at length, his dangerous way across the torrent wide.

- Then gently laid his burden down, and, with bent knee and brow,
- Prayed thus to him, "O wondrous child! say who and what art thou?"
- The little child made answer: "I am Christ, the King you love;
- Your generous deeds, your faith and truth, have pierced the heavens above.
- I come to give you earnest of the grace your zeal has found:
- Go, plant that withered, sapless staff once more into the ground."
- The palm-tree bloomed and blossomed, grew with fruit and foliage wild—
- The while a glory crowned the Babe, upon the Saint he smiled;
- Then lifted up His hands to bless him, as he lowly lay:
  And smiling thus, and blessing, the vision passed away.

### The Convert of Ephesus.

The blessed John, one solemn festival,

Did Jesus' love attest;

And marked a youth, of courtly mein, and tall,

Attent above the rest.

His earnestness the sweet Apostle moved;
And when the rite was done,
He drew towards him, as a sire who loved
Would draw towards his son;

And folded him in tender, close embrace,
And blest him o'er and o'er;
Then said, unto the bishop of the place:
"When I am here no more,

"I pray you, make this youth your special care,
For Christ our Lord's dear sake:
Let not the evil one, by covert snare,
Such goodly blossom take."

And answered him the bishop: "I will be
His teacher—guardian—all that you have said;
From this day forth he shall abide with me,
And share my roof and bread."

So, pleased, the Saint departed, and the youth,
Of docile mind and core,
Was soon instructed in all Christian truth—
Learned in all Christian lore.

And piously the bishop him baptized,
And solemnly conferred
The sevenfold graces of the Spirit, prized
As faith's reward and guard.

But then he thought his promise all fulfilled,
And from the youth withdrew;
Whereon a most demoniac gladness filled
An evil-minded crew.

And they surrounded the poor neophyte
With such deceits and wiles,
That he forsook the Church's saving light
For their unholy smiles.

And fell from sin to sin, till, dead to shame,He joined a robber band,That, guided by his daring, soon becameA dread to all the land.

And at this juncture, back to Ephesus

The Saint returned once more;

And his loved convert from the church did miss,

Ere the first day was o'er.

He asked the bishop where the charge he lent
To his good care was gone;
The pastor, thinking gold or wealth was meant,
Said: "Lo! you've given me none!"

But when the Saint his query had made clear, "Alas!" the bishop sighed;

"To us the youth is dead; he was not here Since ere last Eastertide.

"And I have heard that, leagued with wicked men,
And of them still the worst,
He makes his dwelling in a robber den,
And lives by deeds accurst."

The Saint, when this he heard, with sorrow wept; He cried out in his dole:

"Oh! in what careless guardianship I've left
My brother's priceless soul!"

Then, presently, requesting one to guide,
The aged, toilworn man
Did to the mountain of the robber ride,
And its ascent began.

Nor had he far proceeded, when a thief
Rushed on him, with wild race:
The fearless Saint said: "Lead me to your chief;
Let him decide my case."

So, in they brought him; and the wretched youth Came frowning forth, and armed; But soon the great Apostle's look of ruth With its old sweetness charmed.

And grief possessed the sinner, and he strove,
Ashamed, to steal away:
But the old man clung to him, and, with love,
Implored his further stay.

- "Oh, child!" he said, "how can you fly me thus,
  While I so long for thee?

  Come back to our dear Lord, who died for us—
  For you, as well as me.
  - "He loves you still; 'mid all His heavenly state,
    Your safety He desires:
    I pledge you my own soul 'tis not too late—
    God's mercy never tires!"
    - And as he spoke and wept, the youth's tears flowed:

      He dropped the arms he bore,

      And owned aloud the weary, weary load

      Of sin, that crushed him sore.
    - And when the good Apostle towards him pressed,
      He clasped him back again;
      But hid the wicked right hand in his breast,
      As though the Saint 'twould stain.

But the benignant Saint the sullied hand Caught to his lips with love;

He said: "We'll make it yet do deeds so grand, That 'twill be far above

"The other members in our Lord's esteem!"

And so, with soothing word,

He cheered the sinner's anguish, that, extreme,

Seemed like to break life's chord.

And when the first wild tide of grief was poured,
The Saint his fast and prayer
Partook; nor left him till, once more restored,
He Christ's great gifts did share.

Then years passed over, and Saint John, outworn, Lay in his final sleep;

And the bereaved Church, with suffering torn, Could only pray and weep. When, from the desert came, so pale and gaunt,
A penance-wasted man;

And he, with courage that no ills could daunt, John's work again began.

He loved and served; he ceaseless toiled and taught,

With reasoning clear and bright;

He tore the web that sophistry had wrought Round God's pure truth and light;

And won unnumbered souls to bliss—then died:
And Christians, far and near,
Held him in memory as one sanctified,
And to the Master dear.

For it is writ: "Who shall to justice teach,
Himself in Heaven will shine—

A glory that transcends all human speech— A star of light divine."

# Saint Petronilla's Bridal.

- AGES agone, in our faith's first dawn, The Tiber's unresting billow,
- With its yellow foam, washed the vine-clad home Of the beautiful Petronilla.
- No vexing care in her life had share—

  To Christ every thought rose solely;
- And each dawn brought its meed of shining deed, Or rapture high and holy.
- When Valerius, one day, as he passed that way, Looked, by chance, on her lovely face;
- Saw the splendours half hid 'neath the perfect lid—
  The delicate, virginal grace—
- And pleaded his passion in the earnest fashion Of his grand, Etruscan race.

Not often, 'neath lowly fisher's roof,\*

Are such suitor's promises told:

Like snow on the rocks spread his countless flocks, His coffers ran o'er with gold;

And a conquerer he upon land and sea, From his earliest youth's beginning;

Let who might essay, he had borne away

What prize he thought worth the winning.

So the Fathers counselled, and said: "Belike, "Tis the will of the Master mild,

That as comfort fell on lost Israel,

When her monarch on Esther smiled—

Our trodden faith may be freed from scathe, Through this innocent, blooming child."

Oh! pallid and faint grew the gentle Saint, At the solemn, grave behest;

<sup>\*</sup> Saint Petronilla is said to have been the daughter of Saint Peter, the Apostle.

- And she dared not say to the Fathers grey

  The trouble that filled her breast:
- But when these were gone, and once more alone, She uplifted her eyes, tear-dim,
- To her chosen One, on His star-girt throne,

  And asked solace and aid of Him.
- And the many-hued sunset died out of the West, And the evening grew chilly and deep,
- And without a sound the night folded around—Yet she ceased not to plead and weep.
- Only at the midhour, when the planets of power Their appointed paths 'gan to follow,
- And the moon, riding high through the cloudless sky, Swung into the zenith hollow,
- Rose she up, comforted, and decked her bed, With blossoms and myrtle spray,
- And her fair limbs bedight in bridal white— Then down in her beauty lay,
- With fingers light laced o'er her slender waist,

  Awaiting the bridegroom gay.

- The first ruddy streak on the Alban peak, Saw, with many a bright gift laden,
- A nuptial throng, who, by tabor and song, Called aloud to the sleeping maiden.
- But all in vain rang the glad refrain

  Of the eager, exulting lover;
- The true Bridegroom in the night had come—
  The lasting espousal was over!
- And with roses rare they bound her hair, And down where the alders quiver,
- They made her a grave, by the eddying wave Of the great, old famous river.
- And time eased the flow of Valerius' woe— He went on his way as before;
- But never a bride stood up by his side, Or was lifted his threshold o'er.

## Bierre Cellain.

CAME to Dominick a plaint, Grievous to the zealous Saint— Faith in fair Limoge is faint, Sin and schism her people taint.

And he ponders well and long, Who shall go to heal this wrong? While around him eager throng Brethren, learned, wise, and strong.

But his eye passed o'er the row, Down to one who stayed below; And he said, in accents low, "Peter Cellain, thou shalt go." Then the brothers, with one voice,
Murmur at the prior's choice:
Some in grief, in anger some,
While, with wonder, Pierre was dumb.

For, all slow in thought and speech, He had never dared to preach; Only waiting upon each, Ever sought himself to teach.

And, his first amazement spent,
At the father's knee he bent,
And, with humbleness and meekness,
Urged his ignorance and weakness.

"Send," he said, "The Frere Guerièe:
I will go with him, and be
Servant to him, so that he
May, for God's good work, be free."

This the Saint would not allow;
And he bade Pierre, by his vow,
To be in Limoges town
Ere another night came down.

So he went—and soon there came Tidings of such holy flame, Kindled by his ministry, That Limoge from schism was free.

Then they asked the Saint again, What he saw in Pierre Cellain, That such choice he did devise; And he answered in this wise:

"Tis the loving heart that still Wins the people to its will; Some were wiser, but no other Loved, like that poor silent brother."

#### The Cross of Aillenbach.

- EVERY Ave was repeated, all the evening hymns were ended,
  - And the pious folks of Aillenbach were turning from the church,
- When a pallid, wayworn woman up its hilly street ascended,
  - And, breathless, sat her down to rest beside the crowded porch.
- She was young, but none of youth's sweet graces decked her wasted figure:
  - Shrinking there from cruel glances, with her baby at her breast;

- For all knew the Syndic's daughter, and they said, with scornful rigour,
  - It was well the old man lay where grief no more could break his rest.
- While they spoke, thick darkness gathered, and, with close and rattling clangour,
  - Thunder-clouds flashed out above them, and wild, driving rain came down;
- And they said: "The sinful woman would expose them to God's anger:"
  - So, despite her prayers and pleadings, she was driven from the town,
- Out into the raging tempest—out through all the driving shower—
  - Where, at first, she courted death, and sank into the dripping moss.

- But her baby nestled closer, and the lightning's fitful power
  - Showed her shelter, 'neath the shed that hung above a wayside cross.
- And she thought of Christ—the pitiful, the merciful—who never
  - Shut his loving arms to sinners; and, on bended knees, she crept
- To the pierced feet, and kissed them; and, with clasp that would not sever,
  - Wound her arm around the cross's base, and in its shadow slept.
- But awakened soon, to see a man, with pale and wounded forehead,
  - Bending o'er her, with compassion in his looks, so mild and meek:

- Oh! he, too, had borne and suffered—oh! he, too, had grieved and sorrowed:
  - Tears were in his eyes, and tear-drops stained his hollow, wasted cheek.
- For a while he gazed upon her; then, in accents soft and tender,
  - Did he ask her why she harboured in that lonely, fearful place.
- And she told him how that none would any help or comfort lend her—
  - With a wild, self-loathing told him all her shame and deep disgrace!
- And he did not turn away; he only bent, in deeper pity,
  - To the timid, shrinking creature, and he smoothed her brow and hair;

- And so sweetly to his bosom drew the infant, scorned and pretty,
  - That he won, at length, the mother from her anguish and despair.
- Then he told her of a house he had, where all was rich and splendid—
  - Of a house so strong, that, 'gainst it, neither grief or death had power;
- And bade her to rejoice, for all her wanderings drear were ended—
  - With her babe she'd share its shelter, ere another passing hour.
- And contentment and delight through every throbbing vein, 'gan stealing,
  - At the promise, that he'd keep her 'neath his roof for evermore;

- For, from when she first beheld him, in her heart there stood a feeling,
  - That he was some friend, beloved and lost, in thoughtless days of yore.
- Yes, she surely knew that face, ere innocence and she had parted—
  - Ah! those grave sweet eyes had met her, in her days of hope and pride.
- Musing thus, she glanced around her, and with awe and terror started;
  - For the cross above was vacant—He, the Christ, stood by her side.
- But he vanished at the instant, for just then an ancient woman—
  - One whose guardian hands had cared her, through her helpless infancy—

- Seeking for her, did, with torch's light, the chapel's gloom illumine;
  - And she prayed the Syndic's daughter, to return to her roof-tree.
- But the sinner would not go: she told her strange, mysterious story
  - To th' affrighted dame, who fled away in terror at the tale:
- While in patience, with her infant, she abode the coming glory—
  - And we truly know, that, in her case, God's promise did not fail.
- For, although no human eye beheld the lonely woman dying,
  - Thousands saw a burning radiance, like the glorious sun at noon,

Shine around the humble chapel, where her babes she were lying,

White and cold, beneath the radiance of the n risen moon.

# The Trappist Brother.

The damps of death bedewed his cheek,

Death's glaze was on his eye;

Yet, would he to the brethren speak,

Before he'd lowly lie.

He said he had a tale to tell,

That might preserve a soul from hell

Upon the judgment-day:

He said he'd make a last request—

Leave to their care a dear bequest—

Ere he could pass away.

And, as they gathered left and right, He uttered low: "A fair, Young brother made my youth's delight,
And claimed my manhood's care—
A fiery spirit, keen and strong,
That, 'gainst the marshalled hosts of wrong,
Had been a tower of pride—
A full, rich nature, from whose brink
Ten thousand thirsting hearts might drink,
Nor waste the generous tide.

"But all this tropic growth of good
The tempter did allure;
His virtue's very magnitude
But made the shaft more sure.
And, when he sunk, 'twas with the fall
Of those that from Heaven's crystal hall,
Through night and chaos, fell.
No fear could check—no hope could win—
He revelled in the guilt of sin,
Like one in love with hell.

"I found, at length, my counsels vain
But turned his heart to stone,
And left him, with a depth of pain
To God in Heaven best known:
And came to this calm home and blest,
But not to seek repose or rest
For weary pulse and limb:
By morning's dawn and noontide's light,
Through all the watches of the night,
My prayers uprose for him.

"And oft, of late, I thought the plea

Had reached Heaven's high domain;
And hoped, that even in life, I'd see

Him back restored again.

But God has willed it otherwise,

Such comfort He to me denies—

And may His will be done!

Who willeth not the sinner's death, But rather yields him vital breath, Till from his guilt he's won.

"But, I beseech ye, holy ones,

Here, safe from sin and dole,

Forget not, in your orisons,

His wretched, wandering soul.

The prayers you'd spend above my bier,

Divide with him, my brother dear—

What matters my delay!

I think I could not rest in Heaven,

While one so well beloved is driven

At every passion's sway!"

He ceased here, and backward sunk,

As though his griefs were o'er;

While, from the silent crowd, a monk

Came up the couch before.

His tears like summer rain-drops fell,

His quick, strong trembling shook the cell;

And as he drew anear,

He bared his bowed and humbled head—

In low, heart-broken tones he said,

"My brother, I am here!"

You should have seen the sick man then,
With mien and look sublime;
He rose up straight and tall, as when
In manhood's lusty prime—
And sprang to meet the form that press'd,
With answering fervour, to his breast,
And "God be praised!" he cried:
And in that loving, close caress,
With that deep cry of happiness,
The faithful guardian died.

# Saint Dorothea.

- "LISTEN to me, Dorothea, let the vapid phantasm go,
- Even though it all were real, there is a better heaver below:
- You would never meet with love like mine, an' you'c traverse all the spheres,
- Or live through every cycle of their fabled endless years.

- "Poor child! 'tis hard to stand alone, amid this gazing crowd;
- But like a dream 'twould vanish, did you speak one word aloud—

- Just once, to lift that dainty hand above you mounting flame,
- And none will dare to stand before Theophilus' chosen dame.
- "You will not speak, you will not look, dear heart, the time is flying—
- Oh! did you know the anguish drear that waits upon the dying:
- Oh! could you think what 'tis to love, the what might be of bliss-
- I never thought of this, great gods, I never thought of this!
- "My beautiful, I've killed you, I, who would have borne the stress
- Of the world's worst pang, to save from ill, your lightest silken tress.

- In my mad desire to win you, spoke the rash accusing word,
- That brought your fair young head, this day, beneath the ruthless sword."
- She lifted slow her weary lids—she looked into his eyes—
- "And weep not so, you did but speed my way to Paradise;
- Nor fear that I'll forget you there, I'll send you comfort sweet—
- Fruits and blossoms that have grown beneath the bless'd Redeemer's feet."
- He heard her not—he heeded not—so heavy was his woe;
- But, in the night, as wild he paced his chamber to and fro,

- A radiant presence stood within the closed and guarded door—
- White vestments bound his beauteous limbs, a casket bright he bore.
- And ne'er, I ween, on earth was seen, aught like that casket rare,
- Of wreathed amaranths 'twas formed, of asphodels so fair;
- And in its depths, coy nestlings, lay the ruddy fruit a-row,
- Strange odours floating round it, mystic brightness in its glow.
- And while, unto the mourner's clasp, the blooming gift was brought,
- Was said, "Blest Dorothea, sent this token of her thought:"

But the youth no sooner touched it, than he owned Christ's saving power—

The love of Jesus held his soul a captive from that hour.

#### Saint Thomas.

- What time the King of Indies high proclamation made,

  That architects and builders should to his court repair,
- A vision of the Saviour to the blessed Thomas said:
  - "It is my will that thou go hence, and build his palace fair:
- Yea, build it in such steadfast wise it may not know decay,
- For I have chosen Gondophorus to dwell with me for aye."
- Then swiftly rose th' Apostle, and took the scroll He gave, And, ere the evening's shadows fell, he stood within the gate,

- Where, on high, the King was seated, with aspect ster and grave,
  - While, below, the nobles wrangled, in angry, lou debate:
- For craftsmen, many a one that day, had plan au counsel brought,
- Yet none could please the kingly mind—none mate the kingly thought.
- But, changed the monarch's face, when he the heaver sent scroll surveyed—
  - He gazed on lengthened colonnade, on fretted arc and spire:
- Then, with a smile of mild content, he stroked he beard, and said:
  - "In truth, no better dwelling could the heart of ma desire;
- And if you build me such a home, henceforth you place shall be,
- Above the proudest satrap here, and second but to me

- And heaps of massy silver bright, and eke of gold a store,

  He poured out, at the builder's feet, and bade him

  work amain;
- Then rode forth to a distant war, and two long years were o'er,
  - Before his face was turned to his terraced towers again.
- Meanwhile the Saint the hoarded wealth had bounteously outspread,
- On the wounded, and the helpless, and the children wanting bread.
- I ween the monarch's anger was fearful when, at last,

  The tale the cunning courtiers told was free of doubt

  or cavil:
- The deepest dungeon in the land that night held Thomas fast,
  - While the King tossed on a restless couch, all eager to unravel

- A scheme of such dire torture, as since the world began, Had never torn the quivering frame, or wrung the heart of man.
- Yet, he slept at length, and, in a dream, beheld the loved design
  - Right gloriously accomplished—rough gold made dome and column;
- The architrave and cornice were bright with diamonds' shine—
  - The minarets of ruby lifted flame-points grand and solemn;
- While, within, a sound of joyance rose—a lay so strangely sweet,
- His long-parched lids with tears.were wet, his stern pulse stayed its beat.
- And, as he wept, an angel told how the doom'd man,

  By generous deed, and grateful prayer, had built the

  palace fane:

- And how the kingly power would pass, the kingly name be gone—
  - The well-poised earth itself rush down, but this should aye remain.
- And, at the cry, the King woke up, in wonder and great fear,
- And, calling Thomas to him, bade him the truth make clear.
- And the worker told Christ's story, and to the King was given
  - To know the faith and love it, and take it to his core;
- And, by the Saviour's bounty, from out his soul was
  - The towering pride and passion, that had been his bane before.
- And, when death called him in the end, he went home, nothing loth:
- Pray God, my reader, such bright roof, may, one day, shield us both!

# The Offering.

CAME a monarch to a craftsman's dwelling,
Saying: "Craftsman, let these hands of thine
Fashion straight a crown, that, all excelling,
May be worthy of our Lady's shrine.

- "Priceless jewels, for her sake, I proffer;

  Long the glittering, virgin ore you see,

  Patient waited in our strongest coffer,

  For a purpose worth its purity.
- "And, I pray you, spend your finest fancies— Let your subtlest chasings here be seen: Nought may be omitted that enhances Ruby's blush, or opal's changeful sheen.

"So, perhaps, the mother-maid, when turning Pitying glances on our vale of tears, Seeing this, my gift, may help my mourning, Lapsing footsteps to th' eternal years."

Then he went, and though, at first, the splendour

He had brought made glad the artist's eyes;

Soon another feeling, sad and tender,

In his gentle bosom 'gan to rise;

For he, too, loved Mary, and she clearly

Had been, through all griefs, his help and stay:

Now it pained him, holding her so dearly,

That he barren vows alone could pay:

Till a chance touch, 'gainst his girdle's lining,
Showed him he was not all bankrupt yet;
And a many a careful fold untwining,
Forth he drew an ancient amulet—

Wrought with quaint device, and mystic tracing,
From a nigh-forgotten worship caught;
And the youth, upon it fondly gazing,
Lent him to the memories it brought.

Oh! the world was wide, and many a blossom, Womanly and fair, its homesteads bless'd; But was none like her, on whose white bosom That poor, carven toy had wont to rest

And hot tears, without or stay or measure,
O'er the glittering trinket streaming fell;
Little seemed the king's gifts to his treasure,
When he set it in the crucible.

Then, as though the spirit's fret and travail
Quickens thought, and clears the inner sight,
Came a scheme, of which the maze to ravel,
Was a passionate, intense delight.

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And so well the cunning fingers aided,
What that moment's inspiration planned,
Flowers that saw its rise were yet unfaded,
When the accomplished marvel thrilled the land.

But the youth no more touched style or graver— Entered from that hour nor court or mart; Led, we may not doubt, by Mary's favour, To prefer the purer; better part.

# Sister Madeleine's Brayer.

As gentle Sister Madeleine went down to early Mas An aged woman stood within the pathway she she pass,

And earnestly and tearfully besought the holy nun To offer up that morning's prayer for her unhappy s

Poor youth! he had been stricken in his mid caree sin,

And now, devoid of speech and thought, he lay dea shade within:

And oh! she cried, he'd soon be past all sacrame: power,

For fainter stirred life's obbing tide with every pass hour!

- The Sister promised her request, and soothed her grief awhile;
- Then, as the bell was ringing, hastened upward through the aisle,
- And reached her place, where fell the chancel windows' thousand dyes,
- While yet the priest was robing for the mystic sacrifice.
- Before her, as she lowly knelt, the sculptured rood uprose,
- And all her thoughts were drawn to Christ, who bore thereon our woes:
- She sorrowed with Him, lone and faint, in dread Gethsemani—
- She trembled at His piteous plaint on awful Calvary.
- Then, as the Mass proceeded, and the choir grand anthems poured,
- With those that gazed from Olivet the maiden's thoughts upsoared;

And gladness for His bliss supreme—His glory infinite, Held her absorbed till closed the sacred, expiative rite.

- And only then, when other duties claimed her time and thought,
- Came to her mind the promise that the mother's tears had sought;
- And, full of shame and pain, the nun her lapse of memory mourned—
- Both heart and step were heavy, as she up the pathway turned.
- And, lo! where, but an hour before, the mother's sighs were rife—
- The dying boy, not dying now, but strong with lusty life,
- Was waiting her, and as she came, with fainting, failing breath,
- He knelt, and thanked her for the prayers that won him back from death.

- He heeded not that she denied, with eager, earnest tone:
- He promised that the life so spared should now be God's alone—
- That, ere the morrow's sun would rise, he'd seek some lonely place,
- Where he, by penitence and prayer, might all his sins efface.
- And then he went, while, sore perplexed, the nun her chamber sought,
- But there an angel to her ear this gracious message brought—
- The prayer that was forgotten in the affluence of love,
- On stronger wing than all the rest rose to the throne above!

### Saint Genesius.

ROUND the circus Rome was gathered,
And the Cæsar, from his throne,
Bade the mocking game that pictured
Holy Christian rites be shown.

Then Genesius, who was foremost
In the wicked sport that day,
Feigning sickness, called two players,
To baptize him as he lay:

And they sprinkled him with water— Asked if faith he would receive? And, to each succeeding query, Still he answered: "I believe." And, that travestie completed,

He was led the throne before;

There accused, that he, in secret,

Did the Christian's God adore.

And the Cæsar, jesting lightly,

Bade him now deny that faith:

Scatter incense to the idols—

Or he'd surely die the death.

Then Genesius straightway answered,
"Mighty Cæsar, on this morn
Christ was still a fable to me—
Christian but a word of scorn!

"Yet, just now, as these were asking,
If His faith I would receive,
Came a wondrous feeling through me,
While I answered: 'I believe.'

- "From my eyes, and from my spirit,
  Did a darksome veil withdraw,
  And the holiness of Jesus,
  And the beauty of His law,
- "Flashed, like sudden light, around me,
  Need was none their truth to prove;
  All my soul rose up to worship—
  All my heart was drawn to love.
- "And while men, in mockery, laved me—Yearning for the Christian's lot;
  I bemoaned my sins and passions—
  Wept the years I knew him not!
- "And He deigned to show Him to me— Deigned to let mine eyes behold, How He wiped, from out life's volume, My transgressions manifold.

"Oh, great Cæsar! Oh, ye people!

He is God supreme—alone:

Would that you could see as I see—

Other way or truth is none."

But the Cæsar here o'ercoming

The wild wrath that bound his tongue,
Bade the generous, new disciple

To the raging beasts be flung.

So Genesius, who, that morning,
Bore the pagan's foulest taint,
Ere the eventide was sleeping,
Calm in death—a martyred saint!

#### Saint Scholastica.

"TARRY yet awhile, my brother,
Tarry yet a little space,
I would speak to you of other
Matters, now we're face to face.
Many things I would be learning,
Many truths I fain would know;
And besides, my heart is yearning,
And I cannot let you go.

"Since the morn my thoughts are roving,
To our early childhood's days,
The old tenderness and loving
Once again my bosom sways.

"Just now, rising beyond measure,
Did it tempt me to caressings,
That the fear of your displeasure
Changed to solemn, silent blessings.

"Ah! I love you well, my brother,
Nay, you must not now reprove,
God has given us to each other,
It is right that we should love.
In this hour when you are dearer
To my heart than e'en of yore,
He, to me is nearer—clearer,
Than He ever was before.

"And I see him as when dying
On the cross of sacrifice,
Piteous of our grief and sighing,
Tender of our human ties.

"He will never blame if near me,
After all our parted years,
You abide this night and cheer me,
Till the morrow's sun appears."

But the brother answered straightly:

"Sister, what you ask is vain,

Well you know the vow that lately

For our better guard we've ta'en.

It was of my thought and making,

And it were an evil chance,

Should I be the first in breaking

My own rule and ordinance.

"God be with you, may his blessing
On your every action be—"
But the sister, closer pressing,
Pleaded yet more earnestly:

"Only this one night, my brother,
Just this little night I crave,
I will never ask another,
Till the long night of the grave."

Then he answered, very gravely,

"Must I break my solemn vow?

Heretofore, you've aided bravely,

Will you be my hindrance now?

Then, more gently, sweetest teacher,

Dearest help through ill and good,

It is newly in your nature

To be of such wayward mood.

"Pray, and this will soon be over;

Look, O chosen, promised bride

To the crowned, immortal Lover,

And you'll care for nought beside."

And he more had said, but setting
On her hands her forehead fair,
Low she bent, like one forgetting
Present things in earnest prayer.

And a sweet delight soon blending
With her still, absorb'd, calm,
He believed the spouse was sending
Blessed peace and healing balm;
So arose to go, nor noted
That from stunted pine and heath,
Sullen moanings stirred and floated
On the east winds sultry breath.

But when he would outward sally, Such a wild delirium past Over sky, and mount, and valley, That he started back aghast. Like to waves upon the ocean,

Murky clouds broke o'er the sky,
With a reeling, lurching motion,
The red sun sunk utterly.

And the night, with whirl and eddy,
Mist-like closed around the hill;
And the rain, aslant and steady,
Ploughed the earth at its wild will;
And from out the lurid heaven
Great, resounding peals were poured,
And the jagged, fiery levin
Swept the darkness like a sword.

Then his sister's rapt petition
All at once he understood—
Saw the storm, but did the mission,
Of that simple heart and good.

So her turned, and met her rushing
To his side, with pure embrace,
With a gentle gladness flushing
All her lovely brow and face.

And he said to her, with tender,
Sweet reproach: "O sister mine!
You have forced me to surrender
My poor will to will of thine."
But she said: "You were so shielded
'Gainst my pleadings, strong and rare;
See! the loving God has yielded
To one little, earnest prayer!"

Then, with solemn, blissful feelings,
Did they seat them side by side,
And their mutual, bless'd revealings
Made the hours like moments glide.

And when morn brought time of starting,
She was strongest, and she bore,
With a tearless eye, their parting—
But they met in life no more.

### The Martyr.

LINES ON PAUL DELAROCHE'S PICTURE.

Half submerged in the lucid deep—
Pale, from her conflict with death and hell,
The Martyr sleeps her beautiful sleep.

Gathering storm, and coming night,

Over the sea have their shadows spread;

But she floats serene in the blessed light

That haloes her drooping head.

Very youthful and very fair,

The sweet face looks from its briny pillow;

The long, fine threads of her yellow hair

Colours the lapping billow.

Never on her did a rude grief come—
Never a wasting passion press—
Torn away from a happy home,
In the prime of her loveliness.

Oh! he was hard who could seek to harm

The innocent maiden, faithful and fond—

Hard and cruel, who bound that arm

In such rugged, ungentle bond!

But only think of her wonderful fate:

Drifting there, like a wreath of foam,

She has put to scorn earth's haughtiest state—

Conquered imperial Rome!

And won her way to the halls of light,

Where the trusted and proven their high court

keep:

Oh! who would not envy the Martyr bright, Sleeping there her beautiful sleep!



# The Theban Zegion.

THREE days beside the river's bank

The Roman army lay;

Then passed a word, from rank to rank,

That none might disobey.

Maximian willed each soldier there
Should offer sacrifice,
To win the gods' support and care
For their high enterprise.

And soon a hundred altars stood

To meet his fell desires;

From barren height and leafy wood,

Flashed out unhallowed fires.

And impious orgies shamed the sun;
And when he veiled his light,
Hell blushed to see what deeds were done
Beneath the solemn night.

But where the Theban Legion stayed
Another sight was found—
With lifted hands the warriors prayed,
And mourned the guilt around.

And when the priests of Jove would bring
His shrine their lines within,
They turned them from the cursed thing,
As though to look were sin.

And ever as the law was shown,

They cried, with echoing cries:

"To Christ our Lord, and Him alone,

We offer sacrifice."

Maximian heard the loud acclaim,
And, wrathful, swore they'd yield,
Or die a death of bitter shame
On that ignoble field.

"Think not," he said, "your numbers win
From me or care or thought;
An ye were twice ten thousand men,
The lesson shall be wrought,

"That none may slight the gods of Rome,
While breath of life I draw;
And who'll beneath this standard come,
Must have my will for law."

Their Tribune for the Christians spake:

"My liege, we're soldiers true;

All homage that a man can take

We owe and pay to you.

- "Your lightest wish is free to wield
  Our strength or lives alike;
  No foe of yours may stand the field,
  While we have power to strike.
- "But we had ta'en a higher oath,

  Ere we were sworn to you:

  The God that rules above us both

  Demands our fealty, too.
- "His love we carry in our core;

  His breath our lips enliven;

  With praise perpetual, we adore

  And bless the name He's given.
- "Nor can we wrong Him, as 'tis sought
  E'en your regards to win;
  Too dear our fleeting lives were bought
  With such a deadly sin!"

The Cæsar heard in haught disdain,

And, when the speech was o'er,

He set his army round the plain,

Then spake to them once more:

"Now, whosoe'er would live, may lay

His offering on yon shrine;

Who chooses death, need only stay

In his accustomed line."

They laid their arms upon the ground,

They drew together there;

While, from their ranks, escaped no sound,

Save some low-breathed prayer.

But think not theirs the coward pace
Of fear, or shame, or crime;
They never wore such martial grace
As in that solemn time.

For every calm, set feature shone
With triumph, pure and high:
No soldier there that had not won
His separate victory!

Well, reader mine, they met no ruth;

The wasting sword did strike

The vet'ran hoar, the blooming youth—

The first and least alike.

That day the Theban Legion passed

For ever from the land;

Its eagle in the dust was cast—

Its name proscribed and banned.

Yet, while no record lives of those
Who wrought the tyrant's rage,
Its memory only brighter grows,
As age succeeds to age.

And now, who speaks of courage grand,
Of pure and stainless faith,
Tells how the noble Theban band
Stood up to meet bright death.

### Saint Catharine.

WITH lips apart, with eyes upturned,
With white hands o'er her bosom caught,
The dear Saint told, in words that burned,
The wonders that her Master wrought.

Forgotten now the timid shame

That erewhile held her tongue in bond;

One mention of His cherished name,

Has lifted her the earth beyond.

And when her burst of praise was done,
When passed, at length, that transport sweet,
The tempting scribes, to Jesus won,
Were kneeling lowly at her feet.

Grey Marcus, both his aged eyes

Charged with a grief no tears might sate,
Was murmuring, 'mid his bursting sighs:

"O love! O beauty! known too late."

While he, the youthful sage, whose thought
Had been to win her for his own,
Now, every earthly care forgot,
Was sending to the new-found throne

A prayer of penitence and love,
Of faith, and hope, and strong desire,
That ends not till he goes to prove
His homage by a death of fire.

And queenly Catharine has heard

The law that dooms her to the wheel;

And rises quickly at the word,

As eager for its clasp of steel.

Amid the crowds that round her press,
She walks with gentle, stately grace,
A trembling, tender joyousness,
Suffusing all her down-bent face.

Save once, when sobs and murmurs rose,
In pity for her wasted years,
And thoughts of their more lasting woes,
Filled her sweet eyes with sudden tears.

But this faint shade dissolved in light,
As round her form the slow wheel crept;
And with a smile, so heavenly bright,
O peacefully the maiden slept.

Without a wound—untouched—unstained—
Not one bright ringlet of her hair
Within the deadly circlet strained,
That, shattered, fell around her there.

She slept in God, while, from the skies,
An angel troop, with silent flight,
Bend their white pinions where she lies,
And bear her to her Master bright—

Her well-loved Lord, who, years before,
Had wedded her with mystic sign:
And by Him reigns for evermore,
The holy lady Catharine.

### The Knight and the Beper.

- FULKES, Count of Anjou, riding, kinglike, through his vast domain,
- On the summit of Evredon, stayed, awhile, his knightly train;
- For, before him, rose Saint Martin's, with its hundred pointed spires,
- Like a clump of lances shining in the sunset's purple fires.
- And it was the Count's good custom, when he saw such house of prayer,
- On his knees, to send his homage to the Presence shrined there.

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#### THE KNIGHT AND THE LEPER.

- Now it chanced that, as he rose, a hideous leper drawing near—
- Backward shrank, in fear and loathing, servitor and cavalier.
- But the Count, of nobler temper, met the wasted outstretched palms
- With a touch of generous pity, and a bounteous royal alms.
- Still importunate, the leper stayed his foosteps with the prayer,
- "Fain I'd rest me in Saint Martin's, but has none to bear me there."
- And the squires were wroth to hear him'; but, at once, the Count outspake:
- "Freely, friend, I'll bring thee thither, for the Saviour's holy sake.

- "He, I ween, bore heavier burden, when, beneath the bitter tree,
- Worn and weeping, faint and bleeding, He sank down for love of me."
- And he softly wrapped the leper in his mantle, furred and warm—
- To his stalwart shoulders lifted up the shrinking, suffering form.
- Then, with careful step and tender, mindful of his ghastly load,
- Up the broken, dusty pathway, in the fading sunlight, strode.
- But the cavalcade awhile delayed, exchanging eager word—
- He had gained the distant chapel, ere they followed their good lord.

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#### THE KNIGHT AND THE LEPER.

- And they found him by the altar, lost in rapt and earnest prayer;
- But in vain they sought the leper—not another soul was there!
- Now, how his burden vanished, or what in the church befell,
- Though the Emperor's self once questioned him, the Count would never tell!
- But all knew some wondrous favour, in that journey strange, was given,
- For his eyes had the peaceful blessedness of eyes that had looked on Heaven.
- And, with stainless, reproachless footsteps, thenceforward o'er earth he trod,
- Were many who thought the noble Count that day had walked with God.

# The Hun's Defent.

[It is related, in ecclesiastical history, that Attila, King of the Huns, approaching the city of Troyes, Saint Lupus, who was then Bishop of the place, went forth to meet him, saying: "Who are you, who waste and ruin the earth?" And Attila answered: "I am the Scourge of God." Whereon the holy Bishop replied: "The Scourge of God is welcome:" and opened the gates of the city to him. But, as his soldiers eutered, God, doubtless in reward of such humble submission to Divine Providence, blinded them, so that they passed through without doing the least injury to the place or its inhabitants.]

- It was in the glad midsummer time, the sun shone bright and clear,
- The birds were singing in the boughs, the air was full of cheer,
- And overhead the blue sky spread, without a fleck or flaw,
- When messengers of evil brought the fearful news to Troves:

- "With fire and sword, a savage horde is wasting all the land;
- No force may stem their wild onslaught, no pity stays their hand—
- And hither now their course is bent: before the set of sun,
- Will close him round your walls of strength, the fierce and fiery Hun!"
- Ah, me! the woeful sights and sounds that filled the city then—
- The terror wild of wife and child, the still despair of men;
- In the council and the arsenal was tumult and affright—
  ()ne palsy of white terror bound the citizen and knight.
  "Yet," said their princely Bishop, "is not God as strong to save,
- As when He led His chosen race across the parted wave?

- Oh! seek Him still, against whose will no danger could befall,
- Although the leaguered hosts of hell were thundering at your wall."
- Then a calm fell on the people, and a chant of piteous prayer
- Rose in solemn diapason on the hushed and trembling air;
- And, amid their doleful litanies, the Bishop passed in state,
- To where the foe, with heavy blow, struck at the outer gate.
- From the trellised-turret window, asked he of their captain strong:
- "Now, who be you would menace thus our peaceful homes with wrong?"
- But Attila answered scornfully, he spake in bitter mirth:
- "'Tis the Scourge of God, to whom 'tis given to slay and waste the earth!"

- The pastor bowed obedience low, laid cope and staff aside;
- Then once again addressed him to that man of blood and pride;
- But now such accents clothed his words, such tender tones, and moving,
- That all who heard were inly stirred at a faith so leal and loving:
- "And God forbid our gates should close against the Master dear:
- In whatsoever guise He comes, He's surely welcome here.
- We gladly bid Him to our halls—we pray Him there abide"—
- And with his grand old hands he flung the clanging portals wide.
- Have you seen the stream that swept, like chaff, its curbing banks away,
- Silverfooted tread the meadows, nor displace a branch or spray?

- So, that barrier gone, up the streets of Troyes slow welled the fiery Hun;
- But he reft no burgher's treasures, and his hand was raised 'gainst none.
- Oh! the wonders of God's mercy! he was blind to all things nigh—
- Only saw he clouds of angels threat'ning from the upper sky;
- And a terror wilder than it brought urged on th' affrighted horde—
- Her Prelate's faith saved Troyes from scathe, and the fierce, barbarian sword.

## Saint Elizabeth's Roses.

Where, free from its icy film, the stream

Leaped and basked in the morning rays,

Prince Louis paused in his thoughtful walk,

And sent o'er the landscape an earnest gaze.

Grey mists rose from the valley below,

And trailed over chasm and precipice,

Till, winning the mountain's topmost height,

They fainted away in the red sun's kiss.

Hoarfrost garmented wode and dell
In a chill, white radiance, diffused and blent,
As if to carpet our nether world—
The galaxy'd fallen from the firmament.

Facing the stream, a ruddy gleam

Flickered and glowed through a woodland walk,

Painting a thousand mimic suns

On the crystal fringes of bough and stalk;

And closed in a shining aureole,

Round a slim, lithe figure, that, treading there,
In that glory dress'd, the Prince confess'd,

The bonniest shape in the landscape fair.

But, as she passed into the open track,

And a burden showed through her kirtle bright,

The young man's brow grew suddenly black—

Grew lurid and black as a storm-vexed night.

He had told her his bride should her high place shield

With a high reserve, and stately care;
And if pain craved solace, or want appealed,
She had maidens a many her gifts to bear.

- "And wherefore now on this errand bent?"

  "Ah! truly, I could not rest still," said she;

  "The Saviour dear seemed to cry in my ear,

  What you do to aid them, you do for Me.
- "But yet, and I would not displease my liege,
  No queen need scorn what this arm encloses;"
  And, lifting her outer robe, she showed
  A wonderful cluster of opening roses.
  - A strange awe thrilled through the Prince's breast,

    The flush on his forehead came and went;

    He longed to kiss where her light foot press'd,

    As over the blossoms she smiling bent.

Yet he only said: "By the river of life,
Under God's own gaze, grew the flowers, I see:
But O, thou beautiful, perfect wife!
But O, the rose He has given to me!"

# A Story of the Early Dominicans.

A SHORT time after Dominick had set

The germ of his great order, and while he
The young plant cared—a tender sapling yet,
Though soon to ripen to a goodly tree—
A brother plained to him, with rueful face,
That neither food or drink was in the place.

The Saint said: "Do not fear, God will provide;"
Then calling two that stood by him, he bade
Them hasten forth, and search the city wide,
If alms for their sustainment might be had.
The brethren, going, sought from early morn
Till the third hour, and nothing got, save scorn.

#### 156 A STORY OF THE EARLY DOMINICANS.

But, as they were returning, a poor maid,

Who saw how they had borne rebuke and scoff,

A fair round cake upon their basket laid.

A beggar saw the gift, and cried: "Enough

Is there to keep my little children three

From starving: O good masters! give it me."

Then Albert, who was younger than the other,
And more, by nature, mild and pitiful,
Said: "Let us give the cake to him, my brother;
The blessing that from such an act we'll cull,
Will surely do more for our convent, than
A crumb of bread apportioned to each man."

His pleadings led the other to consent:

The beggar carried off their little store;

While, poor and empty-handed, back they went.

Saint Dominick met them at the outer door;

They told him of the alms, and what befell;

He smiling said, "My children, that was well."

And when that they had prayed, he bade them lay
The cloth, and set the cups; and made the sign
With which it was the custom every day
To call the brethren from their cells to dine:
The summons brought them round the empty board,

And then the usual hymn to God was poured.

And lo! even as the pious sounds ascend,

Two beauteous youths, attired in dazzling white,
Were seen approaching from the farther end;

And going, one to left, and one to right,
They, from a napkin at their shoulder spread,
Drew for each monk a dainty loaf of bread.

They touched the empty flagons as they pass'd,
And these with ruddy wine at once brimmed up:
The blessed Dominick they served the last,
And gravely smiled when bending to his cup.
That being done, they vanished quiet away—
Nor has man's eyes beheld them since that day.

### 158 A STORY OF THE EARLY DOMINICANS.

The brethren knew not what to say or think,

Till Dominick, of their wonder taking heed,

Said: "Children, let us fearless eat and drink,

What our good Lord has sent us in our need."

Then each partook of it, and strength divine

Seemed sent with that mysterious bread and wine.

To all save Albert: he fell sick that hour,
And, ere three days were over, calmly died,
Upholding to the last the Church's power,
And by her holy unction fortified:
And those who saw his death, so glad and sweet,
Knew he was safe—his tale of good complete.

But Dominick lived for years beyond that time;
And striving, with a brave, untiring heart,
Wrought many wonders, struck down schism and
crime,

Led thousands to prefer the better part: Then slept in God—and let us hope that he Entreats for us in his felicity.

### The Sleepers.

[Of this curious story many varying accounts have been written; but the sceptical historian, Gibbon, mentions, as a remarkable circumstance, in connexion with so wild a legend, that it may be traced to a period within fifty years of its supposed occurrence.]

- THEY were Grecian youths, and noble, who from home and kin had gone,
- To study Christian laws and lore within a cavern lone;
- And while they pondered, void of fear, great truths of faith and grace,
- A Roman cohort drawing near sealed fast their hidingplace.
- But their God above was watchful, He saw the danger close,
- And the children seven-enfolded in a dreamless, deep repose:

- So the night-blast wailed its descant drear, and the raging tempest came,
- And the song-bird carolled, blithe and clear—but they slumbered on the same.
- Nor the shock of wars disturbed them, nor the nation's gathering call,
- Nor the world's imperious mistress crashing—thundering to her fall.
- The pagan's pride was ground to dust, and over tower and hall
- Upsoared the standard of our trust—and they, peaceful, slept through all.
- But when two weary centuries of fierce turmoil were over,
- A slave, who worked the place beside, their dungeon did discover:

- And, as the sunlight crept within, they roused them once again,
- And, hand in hand, went wandering forth amid the haunts of men.
- And the years had left them blooming, fair and youthful as before—
- The glossy clusters of their hair had the sheen and hue of yore;
- But a stamp of deathless wisdom on their solemn foreheads glowed,
- And more than mortal mildness in their looks and actions showed.
- All things else were worn and altered, changed the very soil and clime;
- Before them rose a city tall, undreamt of in their prime:

- And, amid a stranger race, they paused, where a deacon, learned and sage,
- With subtle query, questioned of the bygone pagan age.
- But they answered: "Give us baptism; we are weary to be gone,
- For our eyes have seen the splendour of the Father's awful throne;
- We have looked upon the Saviour bright, and the Virgin Mother dear—
- Who, that having once beheld the sight, could endure to tarry here?"
- Thus they pleaded, and such longings in their mien and accents spake,
- That a groan of wistful pity from the listening people brake;

- And a solemn grief smote sinful hearts, and a sense of what they'd known,
- Moved some loving ones to longings, strong and tender as their own.
- But the aged deacon hastened to supply the laver blest:
- Then, with smiles of glad contentment, once again they sank to rest;
- Nor will it end, that slumber calm, that still and balmy sleep,
- Till the mighty angel's trumpet echoes over land and deep.

# The Knight's Release.

- "WoE is me!" the Knight lamented—"woe is me! quite lost and lorn!
- What joy is in my father's house, this holy Christmas morn!
- What sounds of hymn and psalmody resound through bower and hall!
- From widow pale, and houseless wight, and new enfranchised thrall,
- To the noble dame who sits in state, amid her daughters fair,
- All feel the blessed interchange of charity and prayer.
- While I, cut off from Christendom, lie here in prison pain;
- And healing shrift, or holy mass, may never know again."

- The Paynim heard the captive's plaint, so pitiful and sweet,
- And, with dastard hand, he struck him, lying fettered at his feet—
- With dastard hand, and cruel force, till his blood bedewed the sod;
- But not the less the true Knight's strain rose fearlessly to God:
- "I had forgot my better lot, when I these words outspake;
- Not all bereft, while it is left to suffer for Thy sake.
- Oh! freely, in Thy glory's cause, be spent the life you gave;
- But comfort those who weep my fate, beyond the western wave!"
- A little while thereafter, as he lay in slumber deep,
- A solemn song, for years unheard, broke the silken bonds of sleep:

- And, lo! he stood the church within, from scar and fetter free,
- While before him rose the holy rite he never hoped to see.
- Oh! little worth were words of mine to tell the wild delight
- With which his loving kindred welcomed back their long lost Knight—
- The women's tender clasp, the grasp of men with sterner will,
- And the vassals glee, once more to see the heir of Rocqueville.

### Saint Eulalie.

O EULALIE! Bright Eulalie!
No wonder men have loved you so—
No wonder your dear history
Still sets all gentle hearts aglow!
O spirit brave, that dared such height!
O true heart, strung with generous faith!
O noble, fervent child of light,
Whose love outbattled pain and death!

When rose the signal sound of strife,

That filled so many with dismay,

She said: "Death's corps holds truest life"—

And, gleeful, armed her for the fray.

Her combat was awhile delayed;
And then, with strong desire and tears,
"Oh! let it come, my Lord," she prayed;
"I long for the eternal years!"

It came at length; with links of steel

They struck the lovely, blooming child—
A Roman crowd was slow to feel,

Yet here the people's wrath broke wild.
But she—she smiled, as with delight—

She said: "He, too, with blood was dyed!"
She said: "These are not wounds, but bright,

Bright trophies of the Crucified!"

Then, hell-inspired—in sheer despair—
In evil's very wantonness—
They lit the gleaming, golden hair,
That streamed adown her modest dress.

The awful nimbus bound her brow—
The fearful veil encompassed her—
Yet did she never swerve or bow,
Or, with one weakling motion, stir.

But when her soul, from out the flame,
In dovelike form, its pinions spread,
And soared to Him from whom it came,
Then, only, drooped the noble head.
And while the people, at the sight,
Forsook the place, in wild dismay,
Upon the ground her blood made bright,
All beautiful the martyr lay.

And God, amid the summer's glow,

From out the sunshine, clear and warm,

Let fall a drift of wondrous snow,

To shroud the sleeping child from harm.

And when the brethren came by night,

To bear her to her place of rest,

Her snowy vesture, sparkling white,

Marked out the Saint 'mid all the rest.

And Eulalie! Bright Eulalie!

From her high place, above the stars—
From her grand throne of victory,

Sends help to all who fight Faith's wars.
The soldier battling for the cross,

The lonely priest beyond the sea—
Whoe'er for Christ bears pain or loss,

Has help from gracious Eulalie!

## The Jesuit Martyr.

One last ecstatic agony—

One withering pang through heart and brow-

And then the clinging withes fall free:

There is no more to suffer now!

A weary sense of foregone pain,

May weigh his heavy eyelids down;

The labouring heart may strive and strain-

He knows his hand is on the crown.

And, "Death, come quickly!" was his cry-

"O happy death! make haste and bring

Th' angelic choir, the vision high,

The endless union with my King!"

But, as the glory was delayed,

A lowlier, tenderer, feeling pass'd-

Ah! what a gracious hand had swayed And shaped his life, from first to last! So sweetly fenced by love and truth, So gently dealt with every time: No tempting lurements vexed his youth, Nor any sorrow marred his prime. His thoughts ran o'er the peaceful days, Beside the bright Loire's hurrying flow: His mother's sad eyes met his gaze, As when she blessed, and bade him go. And the old dreams, by toil and prayer, To win great spoils for Jesus' feet, Came round him, lying wounded there. And still it seemed past measure sweet, With nothing done, with nothing won, To lift his empty open hands, And go up humbly to the throne, And say: "My Master, lo! here stands A broken reed, whose poor endeavour Your sovereign wisdom would refuse:

And may your will be blessed for ever—

I gave myself for waste or use."

So far the thought had led him, when A light touch, laid upon his hair, Recalled him to the earth again; And, looking upward, he was 'ware Of a dark face, whose haughty calm And depth of hue was lost in grief, Yet changed and softened—well he knew Acayiah, the people's chief! Well might he know him! none could send The barbed shaft so keen and well— None could so deeply, sharply wound, Yet leave untouched life's citadel. But grace, with sudden light, had come: What all in vain the martyr taught, His heavenly patience had brought home, His loving, meek endurance wrought.

And kneeling by his victim's side,

The chief Christ's saving name confess'd;

And prayed His servant, ere he died,

To sign him with the signal bless'd,

By which the Saviour crucified

Would mark His own from all the rest.

And Felix? Clear, serene, and bright,
Before him spread Heaven's open gate;
His spirit's wing was poised for flight,
Yet, for such grateful task, he'd wait.
So the strong will held death aloof,
While to th' attentive chief he told
Precept and counsel; law and proof,
And every link of faith unrolled.

"And now, bring water quick!" he said:
Then wildly rose the chief's despair;
Far as the broad savannah spread,
Nor fount nor rippling stream was there.

But happy Felix was too near Th' eternal blessedness to know A pang of earthly care or fear-His dim eyes light with fervent glow, From his wan lips break prayer and praise; The while his failing fingers stray To where a head of golden maize, On the long grass, beside him lay: And sudden dew its cells distilled. Great, beaded drops its circlet spanned, And down the tawny tassel rilled, And filled the hollow of his hand! Oh! angel choirs alone might chant Fit anthem for the solemn rite, That that death-pale hierophant Shared with his dusky neophyte!

They buried him, with wail and cry; They piled a mighty cairn above; And over all, they set on high The cross he loved with such true love. The green moss brought its deepest hues, The wild flowers lent their tenderest grace, And soft airs fanned, and honey dews Fell nightly round the hallowed place. And oft Acayiah would lead His people to the spot, and tell The last high lesson whispered there, And the sweet marvel that befell. And twenty years thereafter, when A wandering black robe came that way, A little tribe of Christian men Were waiting for his ministry. Not one had failed, not one had strayed, Of all that Felix strove to win: The harvest had been longed delayed, But every sheaf was gathered in. O purple seed of rarest worth!

'Twas the old story worked anew-

No land so sterile, but brings forth

Blossom and fruit when sown by you;

No heart so hard, that may withstand

The potency of martyr's prayer,

When 'fore the throne he lifts his hand,

And pleads with bleeding wounds and bare.

Thou noble Host! if greetings sweet

The latest labourer's toil approve,

Who bears the burden and the heat

Best keeps the Master's love—

Who shares the chalice of His woes—

Who has in His own pangs a part—

Must still be strongest 'gainst His foes—

Is aye the dearest to His heart.

#### The Vision of Elias.

When Elias, the Prophet, fled
Unto a cave with fear,
The Lord's voice entered, saying:
"What doth Elias here?"
And he answered: "Fled from peril,
And the prophet-slaying sword."
And it said: "Go forth upon the mount,
And see the passing Lord."

And there came a mighty tempest—
A whirlwind, great and strong—
Uprearing mountains, crushing rocks,
Its awful path along;

And making all earth tremble,
As its huge breath was poured:
But, on its desolating track,
There trod no mighty Lord.

And next, an earthquake's thunderous shock
Clove through the mountain's breast,
Folding, in pall of sulphurous clouds,
Its reeling base and crest;
Then forth, from out the desert,
Warring spears of flame upsoared:
But earthquake's shock, and wasting fire,
Went, and there came no Lord.

At length, a low, soft, whistling sound
Along the mountain passed,
Piercingly sweet: with awe-struck heart
The Prophet heard, and fast

He flung his mantle o'er his face,
And bent to earth his head:
For it was in that still, small voice
The Lord of Heaven sped!

### A Sermon.

"ET VENI SEQUERE ME."-Matt. xix.

One day, a wealthy young man sought our Lord,
Praying: "Good Master, in this vale of tears,
I weary for the land where bliss is stored:
What must I do to gain eternal years?"

The Saviour answered: "Keep God's written law;
Be to your neighbour gentle, just, and true."
The youth replied: "Since breath I first did draw,
These things I've done: what yet remains to do?"

Then Jesus looked on him with love, and said:

"Amen, I say, if thou wouldst perfect be,

Give all thou hast to those who cry for bread,

Leave home and kin, and come and follow Me."

Alas! the wretched one! his weak heart failed—
Not even for Heaven would he his treasures pay:
Though Jesus' sweet and loving eyes appealed,
He sorrowfully rose, and went his way—

Passed from the light of that benignant face;

Deserted his great purpose, pure and high;

Denied the call, put back the proffered grace—

He was content to have, he would not buy.

Ah, me! how often is this tale renewed!

Time after time God seeks our hearts to win—
Calling us to the search of perfect good—
Filling with wild unrest the ways of sin.

And we go to Him, seemingly so strong
In faith and daring, freely would we share
The glories of His kingdom, or along
The world's highways His name and standard bear.

But when He asks for toil or sacrifice— When, lovingly, He'd lead us on the way, Through loyal service, to His paradise— Faithless, and weak, and cold, we turn away.

In vain He stretches forth a bleeding hand

To aid us, where His steps have gone before;

Our guilty feet shrink from the thorn-strewn land,

Which He, the Sinless One, has trodden o'er.

In vain each moment of our lives is lit
With His unfading beauty; vainly fall
Proofs of His power and wisdom infinite,
And wonderful, deep love, transcending all—

Love, that with bountiful, protecting care,

A thousand, thousand planets can enzone,

Yet hold the lowest, frailest creature here,

As though its depths were stirred for him alone.

We spurn alike His beauty, love, and power:

Earth's meanest lure of passion, pride, or gain,
May win what, day by day, and hour by hour,

The Highest, and the Holiest, asks in vain!

Merciful God! and Thou dost bear with us,
So insolent, ungrateful, weak, and blind!

Lord! what is man, that Thou shouldst care for us?

What joy in our salvation must Thou find?

O generous love, so often pained and cross'd!
O never-failing, tender clemency!
Surely what Thou wouldst save will not be lost;
We cannot always hard and perverse be.

But since Thou dost so patiently abide

Our weak and evil nature, some time we,
In very shame, breaking from sloth and pride,
Shall go at length, in real truth, to Thee.

Hasten the day, O Lord! when we, bereft
Of all things for Thy sake, may gladly sing:
"Wealth limitless is ours, whilst Thou art left—
Only enduring good, best treasure, and true king!"

## De Profundis Clamavi.

- O Mary, Virgin Mother! I am sick, and sad, and lonely, Very weary, very hopeless, light and peace alike are gone;
- And I come to thee, my comfortress, my trust, my help, the only
  - One of all my starry hopes, that shines as in old times it shone.
- Scorned foes grow strong against me, trusted friends, alas! betrayed me—
  - Earth recedes, while, O my grief! Heaven draws no nearer to my sight;
- And no human love can comfort, and no human hand can aid me—
  - O my Mother! wilt thou guide me, guard me through this darksome night?

- Once my days were full of promise, cheery as a summer morning;
  - As the sun's calm upward journey, easy seemed life's path to me:
- I could walk with fearless footsteps, hate or evil coldly scorning,
  - Feeling strong to do or suffer, whichsoe'er my lot might be.
- Truly loved I all things lovely; and, at times, my heart, outwelling,
  - Sent up anthems, glad rejoicings, full of faith, and trust, and love,
- To the Holy One, the Perfect, who had made our earthly dwelling
  - A shadow of the heavenly home prepared for us above.
- And I had such dreams, my course should be so stainless, high, and holy—
  - Not the snowflake, fresh from heaven, might be fairer than each deed.

- Thought of self must enter never; I would live for mankind solely—
  - For him labour, think, or suffer, striving for his every need.
- Like the lamp that wastes and burns, to make the darksome way securer—
  - Like the river's onward passage to the great resounding sea;
- Fertilizing, beautifying; growing stronger, deeper, purer,
  - Till I lose me in the ocean of thy Blessed Son, and thee.
- Now, my Mother, it is changed; the dream of white perfection's banished:
  - Vauntingly I strove with ill, and deemed my armour all complete;
- And, at every shock, some rent gaped wide, some trusted weapon vanished,
  - Till, heart-wounded, scared, and sullied, I am lying at vour feet.

- Oh! the soundless depths of sorrow, that encircles our existence!
  - Oh! the deadly might of evil, that we bear ourselves within!
- Can no vantage-ground avail us 'gainst that dreary wave's persistence?
  - Must we always lose in the dread war with worldliness and sin?
- Yet, above the seething waters, o'er the black and troubled ocean,
  - Thou, serenest star, art shining, and no darkness dims thy ray:
- Only calmer for the strife below, the restless, wild commotion—
  - Only lovelier that your orb complete shows 'gainst our frail decay.
- And though, all too certainly, 'twould seem this nerveless hand may never
  - Share the noble toil I whilom called my portion and my dower,

- I can love you still, my life, my queen!—not hell itself could sever,
  - From my heart, the will to bend before your fair and gracious power.
- And, it may be, this impotency, this lack, and need 's the latest,
  - Best device of saving pity, for a soul too self-contained.
- Ah! I know not—but I pray you, by your own loss when 'twas greatest—
  - For His most dear sake, whose blood and tears my forfeit life regained—
- So entreat for me, that, in the end, when, by the Judge thou showest.
  - I, through His far-reaching mercies, of the rescued band may be—
- Not among the vanguard pressing, but the lowest 'mid the lowest:
  - Yet, my Mother! O my Mother! not quite separate from thee.

# Mymn to St. Joseph.

Hall to thee, Joseph! Spouse benign—
Pure type of finest holiness;
Who made no earthward sound or sign,
But straightway up to God did press.
So strong in faith—in love so large—
So diligent in little things,
He gave this Mother to thy charge—
Set in thy care the King of kings.
Oh! ask of thy thrice-blessed Child,
That we, who seek thine aid, may be
Humble and silent, meek and mild,
Watchful, and just, and wise like thee.

Great Saint! a wondrous sweetness blest
Thy hidden life of toil and want:
Heaven's mighty Lord thy daily guest—
Heaven's gracious Queen thy ministrant.
And round that happy, holy death,
What mystic, solemn beauties rise—
Jesus, to catch thy parting breath!
Mary, to close thy dying eyes!

O favoured being! urge the prayer,
That, pure in heart, and mind, and lip,
We, too, may sometimes have a share
In that Divine Companionship:
That, in our last tremendous hour,
Thy comforters will both be nigh,
To strip the evil one of power—
To merge the sting in victory!
Through life and death, entreat that we
May still be one with thine and thee.

# A Prayer.

My suffering Lord, I lowly bend
Unto Thy piercèd feet;
Beseeching Thee to let me bear
Thy yoke, so light and sweet;
And that Thou'd aid me, by Thy grace
Whatever be the cost,
To weep and pray, till I regain
The innocence I've lost.
That, be they long or short, my days
May be one act of grief and praise;
Till I win back the heavenly seat,
That by my sins I've forfeited.

I bring no costly offering,
Sweet Saviour, good and mild—
Nothing for all the mercies shown—
My heart is sin-defiled,
And holding still to creature love,
And this gross evil earth—
Its baseless dreams, its fruitless schemes,
Its mocking, fleeting mirth.
And, oh! I dare not offer Thee
A gift thus fraught with misery;
So prone to wrong, from good so free,
So full of all that is not Thee.

And the mind that Thou hast given,

Has had many a wistful thought,

For the moods and forms of nature,

In each change her seasons brought;

For the stars that tracked the heavens;

For the waves that ridged the sea;—

But seldom, oh! how seldom,

Has it soared aloft to Thee!

Little thinking, in its scorn,

Of the Child in Bethlehem born—

Seldom turning, in its pride,

To the Saviour crucified.

And the voice that was bestowed

To sing Thy praise alway,
In vain, or worse than vain, discourse
Passed many an idle day:
Or spoke its few cold prayers
In a listless, heedless tone;
And only that done carelessly,
Which should be done alone.
So, every gift and grace Thou'st given,
To aid me on my way to heaven,
Has paled, and waned, or wholly died,
In some dark hour of sinful pride.

#### A PRAYER.

And yet, my God, I'll not despair,
But closer to Thee cling;
For to whom can I go but Thee,
True Saviour and true King?
And if my sins are manifold,
I'll but more earnest call;
For well I know Thy mercies, Lord,
Outnumber far them all.
Then, for that gracious mercy's sake,
Vouchsafe the healing word to speak—
Aid me to keep the vow I make:
That heart, mind, voice, with one accord,
May love, think, praise, but Thee, O Lord!

THE END.



